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EDWIN THE FAIR.

EDWIN THE FAIR.

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AN HISTORICAL DRAMA.

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BY a t

HENRY TAYLOR,

AUTHOR OF 'PHILIP VAN ARTEVELDE.'

'Pessima enim res est errorum apotheosis.'—*Novum Organum*, i. 65.

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TO

HENRY HOLLAND, ESQ., M.D., F.R.S.

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED,

IN REMEMBRANCE

OF

IMPORTANT SERVICES

RENDERED MANY YEARS AGO

TO

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

MR. TURNER'S learned and elaborate work has done much to make the Anglo-Saxon times better known than they were formerly, and we have ceased to regard them as antecedent to the dawn of civilization amongst us, or as destitute of the spiritual and chivalric features by which in reality some of the subsequent centuries (though not those *immediately* subsequent) were less distinguished than they. Of the dark ages, in this country, the tenth century was hardly so dark as the fifteenth; and if the aspects of each could be distinctly traced, the civil wars of the Anglo-Saxons would probably excite a deeper interest

than struggles such as those of the Houses of York and Lancaster, in which there was no religious, and hardly any political principle at stake. Indeed, though the three centuries which preceded the Conquest were on the whole less enlightened than the three which followed it, yet the Anglo-Saxon times furnish examples of both the Hero and the Scholar, which the Norman can hardly match; and perhaps the real distinction between the periods is, that amongst the Anglo-Saxons, learning and ignorance, and rudeness and refinement, co-existed in stronger contrast.

But even when Anglo-Saxon history was less read, and otherwise understood, than it is now, some interest was always felt in the reign of Edwin the Fair. There was left to us little more than the outline of a tragic story; in some parts, indeed, even less—for here and there the outline itself is broken and wavering; but the little that was known was romantic enough to have im-

pressed itself upon the popular mind, and the tale of 'Edwy and Elgiva' had been current in the nursery long before it came to be studied as an historical question.

Edwin's contemporaneous annalists, being Monks, were his natural enemies; and their enmity is sufficiently apparent in their writings. But notwithstanding all their efforts, and all the influence which the monastic orders undoubtedly possessed over the English populace of the tenth century, there is reason to think that the interest taken in Edwin's story may have dated from his own times. His name having been supplanted by its diminutive 'Edwy,' seems to indicate a sentiment of tenderness and pity as popularly connected with him from the first; and his surname of 'The All-Fair' (given him, says the Monk Ingulphus, "pro *nimiâ* pulchritudine"), may be construed as a farther indication that the success of the monastic faction in decrying him

with the people, was not so complete as the merely political events of his reign might lead us to suppose.

Whilst the details of his story are left, with one or two exceptions, to our imagination, the main course of the struggle in which he was engaged, represents in strong and vivid colours the spirit of the times. It was a spirit which exercises human nature in its highest faculties and deepest feelings—the spirit of religious enthusiasm; a spirit which never fails to produce great men, and to give an impulse to the mind of a nation; but one which commonly passes into a spirit of ecclesiastic discord, and which cannot then be cast out without tearing the body. In the tenth century it vented itself in a war of religious opinion.

The monastic orders—in this country at least—were then in the ascetic and fanatical stage of their existence; and the wisdom of this world at

Rome, profiting by the enthusiasm of these distant regions,—in which the Pope had more honour than in his own country,—was engaged in the endeavour to fasten the obligation of celibacy upon the Secular Clergy, thereby reducing the whole Church into a more compact and orderly subservience to its Head. The Regulars afforded their zealous co-operation; for they naturally grudged to their secular brethren the liberty which they had denied to themselves: and for their own rule of life they had adopted, in its fullest rigour, the maxim of St. Augustine—"Malum est mulierem videre, pejus alloqui, pessimum tangere." This question of clerical celibacy, therefore, became one of the great sources of divisions in the Church.

The growing influence and uncompromising spirit of the monastic orders had been regarded by successive Kings, sometimes with favour, and sometimes with jealousy and fear; and according

as one side or the other was uppermost, Seculars were ejected from their benefices, and monasteries established; or Monks were ejected from the monasteries, and Seculars restored. But upon the whole, the fanatical party had been gaining ground for more than a century; and in the reign immediately preceding that of Edwin, monasteries had been multiplied throughout the land.

From this state of things, danger arose to the country in more ways than one. First, there was the weakness from internal divisions; and next, there was the exhaustion of the King's revenues, in the building and maintenance of monasteries, instead of ships and military defences. The Danes saw their advantage, and after sixty years' remission of hostilities, they descended once more upon the British coasts. A monastery was more easily stormed than a castle, and yielded a richer recompense; and the prayer of the Anglo-Saxon

liturgy, for deliverance "a furore Northmannorum," brought no help to those who had renounced the duty of helping themselves. Thus the Regulars had hardly triumphed over the Seculars, before the latter were revenged by the Danes.

In the treatment of my subject, I have brought these causes and consequences much more closely together than the mere chronology of history would warrant. Considering the meagreness of the records which remain of the Anglo-Saxons in that age, it would have been impossible to represent the spirit of the times by means of the events recorded as occurring in the brief reign of Edwin the Fair. I have not scrupled, therefore, to borrow from the bordering reigns incidents which were characteristic of the times, and acts which, though really performed by some of my *dramatis personæ*, were not performed by them during that portion of their lives which is included in the reign of Edwin.

I have taken the further liberty of choosing from amongst the accounts of the reign given by its earliest historians, where they conflict, those which best suited my purpose, whether or not they might have the best claim to be considered authentic. In the accounts of the earlier ages of a country, perhaps the truth of history is to be sought, less in the accuracy of the record, than in the nature and character of the events recorded, and the manner of recording them; and the generalizations from the facts of such histories may be just, whether the facts be truly stated or not; provided only they be such facts as might probably and naturally have occurred in such times. The first decade of Livy's History has been proved of late years to be for the most part fabulous; but the fables are characteristic of the times, and the Discorsi of Machiavel, generalizing from them, have lost little or nothing of their value. To take an example from the subject of

my drama, William of Malmesbury relates of Edwin, "Nam et Malmesburiense cœnobium, plusquam ducentis septuaginta annis a Monachis inhabitatum, clericorum *stabulum* fecit." Whether it be true or not, that the monastery at Malmesbury had been established for more than 270 years, and that Edwin ejected the Monks and put Secular Clergy in their place, we derive from the relation the knowledge that such was the sort of event by which that age was agitated, and we learn also the spirit in which such an occupation of a monastery was regarded by a Monk.

But the historians of Edwin's reign are at variance upon more important events than this. Even the time and manner of his death are differently related; and I have not much cared to inquire whether the preponderance of authority be not against the account which I have followed. I have overleaped also, for the sake of compression, one of the vicissitudes in Dunstan's career—his

exile in Flanders; and, in short, I have considered, that, where the letter of history was so scanty and doubtful, my chief care must be to be true to its spirit.

LONDON,
June, 1842.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

OF THE SECULAR PARTY.

EDWIN THE FAIR, *King of England.*

EARL ATHULF, *Cousin to the King, and Brother to Elgiva.*

EARL LEOLF, *Heretoch or Commander of the King's Armies.*

EARL SIDROC, *a Leader of the King's Party.*

CLARENBALD, *a Secular Priest and Lord Chancellor.*

WULFSTAN THE WISE, *Chaplain to Earl Leolf.*

ERNWAY, *a follower of Earl Leolf.*

GRIMBALD, *the King's Jester.*

RICOLA, *a Secular Priest, Chaplain to the King.*

OSBERN, *Bishop of Rochester.*

OF THE MONASTIC PARTY.

ODO SEVERUS, *Archbishop of Canterbury.*

DUNSTAN, *Abbot of Glastonbury.*

HARCATHER, *a Military Leader, and Governor of Chester Castle.*

RUOLD, *Son of Harcather.*

BRIDFERTH, *Chaplain to Dunstan.*

SIGERIC, *Secretary to Odo.*

GURMO, *A creature of Dunstan.*

Ceolwulf, Ætholric, Eadbald, Ida, Brand, Eofrid, Gorf, Tosty, &c. *Military Leaders.*

Leofwyn, Fridstan, Oswald, Ethelwald, Cumba, Godredud, Morcar, Monn, &c. *Ecclesiastics.*

WOMEN.

ELGIVA, *Cousin to Edwin the Fair, and afterwards Queen.*

ETHILDA, *Sister to Edwin the Fair.*

GUNNILDA, *Queen-Mother.*

EMMA, *Daughter to Wulfstan the Wise.*

HEIDA *and* THORMORDA, } *Fortune-tellers.*

TIME—ANNO DOMINI 956.

EDWIN THE FAIR.

EDWIN THE FAIR.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A FOREST.

A SWINEHERD *tending his swine.*

SWINEHERD (*sings*).

The hog he munch'd the acorns brown,
Till joyfully twinkled his tail,
And he twitched himself up, and he tossed himself down,
And he wriggled and reeled, and gallopped and squealed,
As though he were drunk with ale:
For you shall know that what by ale or wine
To man is done, that acorns do to swine.

Ah! it was so. Alack-a-day! so it was once.

Enter a FORESTER.

FORESTER.

Grunt! grunt! No end to swine. Why here's a herd!

Beech-mast is scarce. Routing and grunting. Ho!
Who's here?

SWINEHERD.

A sinful unconsolable man,
The swineherd Ulf.

FORESTER.

Why swineherds are but men,
And man is sinful. Ulf, what grief is his?
This is a world of ever-growing griefs.

SWINEHERD.

His grief, sir, is a grief touching his swine,
Which swine have lost their appetites.

FORESTER.

How so?

SWINEHERD.

The how, sir, is a tale that moves to pity,
But if you list to hearken, it was thus:
Last Tuesday-week, the vigil of St. Swithin,
Up in the branches of an ancient tree
I perched myself for shade, and there the wind
Rocking the bough and snoring in my ears,
It so mishappened that I slid asleep.
When I awoke my herd had wandered far,
And far had I to follow, till, God's love!

Belated in the dusky forest's verge
I found them, much amazed, a furlong's length,
No more, from where the holy Dunstan dwells,
Scourging his wasted body half the night,
And wrestling with the Evil One.

FORESTER.

Wish you well!
A tickle neighbourhood was that.

SWINEHERD.

'Out, swine!'
Quoth I, 'ye villains, will ye run to the pit,
And I to follow!' And with might and speed
I drave them back; but volleying behind
There came such howls as scared us to the heart,
And, to my humble thinking, since that hour
We have not had that stomach for our food,
That hearty hunger, and that natural joy
In eating, that we wont to have.

FORESTER.

Such howls!
What howls? The Devil's were they, or were they Dunstan's?

SWINEHERD.

Sir, I have ears unskilful to discern

Betwixt the twain. They might have come from either.
For Dunstan his own back not less belabours
Than he belabours Satan.

FORESTER.

Ay, 'tis true;
A holy man is he and gives his life
Simply to crucify the lusts o' the flesh
And mastery over evil spirits achieve.
But wist ye that *he* hurt the swine? Poh! no.
Not he.

SWINEHERD.

I know not.

FORESTER.

Thou say'st well thou know'st not,
For thou know'st nothing; thou art an ignorant swineherd.
'Tis not thy swine alone; through all the land
Swine have the murrain, dogs are sick o' the mange,
Rot kills the sheep, and horses die o' the staggers;
With rust and mildew droops the earing corn,
Swarm orchards with the moth, gardens with grubs;
And shortly, man and beast and herb o' the field
Are stricken with a thousand plagues and blights
Straight from the hand of God.

SWINEHERD.

Swine, didst thou say?
Swine have the murrain! Is it come to that?
Pritheé, why so?

FORESTER.

It is but our deserts.
To please the young, misguided, heedless King,
Our Monks of Malmesbury, those righteous men,
That ever were at work with book and bell
Praying and fasting, and with thong and scourge
Their flesh tormenting, have been rooted out,
And in their place vile Seçulars are planted,
A hunting, dancing, and carousing horde,
With wenches that they call their wives forsooth!
Oh shame to Clerks, that they should wive and bed
And lead their lives so beastly! Woe is me!
What but a curse could light upon the land,
When holiest men, that wont to serve the poor
With alms unceasing, beg their bread themselves,
And lewdest prosper! Softly—stand aside;
Here comes a nobleman, if we may guess
By his attendance. Canst thou yet discern
His cognisance? Earl Athulf, as I live!

Enter ATHULF.

ATHULF.

Save you, good friends! How far may 't be to Kingston?

FORESTER.

An hour, my lord, or little more. 'Tis late,
Or you might take the road by Warlewood chase:
'Tis some mile shorter.

ATHULF.

Being so, my friend,
The lateness should be called a reason more.

FORESTER.

True, sir; but it should lead you near the spot
Where Father Dunstan for these three weeks past
Nightly encounters Satan.

ATHULF.

For myself
I heed not that. Howbeit, that way wending,
Methinks that my attendance would wax thin.
Please you to show me by what devious path
I may eschew the Devil and Father Dunstan.

FORESTER.

At your command, sir. I will go before you.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A CORRIDOR IN THE PALACE AT KINGSTON.

Odo, Harcather, Ruold.

ODO.

Earl Athulf come! I 'll with you to the King.

HARCATHER.

You 'll find your monasteries emptied out
Under your nose, my Lord, at Sheen and Sion
Ere it be long; and why you arm not now
It passes me to guess.

ODO.

The Abbot, Sir,
The Abbot listens to no mortal voice
Except his mother's; and old Cynethryth
Is fearful of divisions; for in her youth
The splitting of the realm within itself
Was wont to sound a summons to the Dane,
And fetch him o'er the seas.

HARCATHER.

An old wife's tale.

ODO.

I'll bring you to the King, and testify
That what you charge on Athulf and his House
Is worthy of all credit.

HARCATHER.

Ruold, mark,
I will thee not to loiter thus at Court.
Get thee again to Chester, son. Farewell.

[*Exeunt* ODO *and* HARCATHER.

RUOLD.

Father, farewell! and then farewell the Court!
To stay should but divide me from my friends
By worse than distance; for my father's hand
Is raised against them. Wherefore, fare you well,
Good Athulf and Elgiva. Peace be with you;
And not the war my father fain would wage.

[*Exit.*

Enter LEOLF *and* ATHULF.

LEOLF.

Fair shines the hour, and friendly to my spirit,
That brings thee back. Welcome once more to Kingston!
I would have said to Court; but, by my faith!
Far leifer would I to a cottage bid thee,
Than such a Court as this.

ATHULF.

Court, cot, or camp,
Hut, hovel, let it be, or blasted heath,
In shine or storm, well met! What ails the Court?

LEOLF.

Its old disorder; complex and compounded
Of many ills in even shares partaken.
Ambition's fever, envy's jaundiced eye,
Detraction that exulcerates, aguish fear,
Suspicion's wasting pale insomnolence,
With hatred's canker.

ATHULF.

To which add, no doubt,
Monks for physicians.

LEOLF.

There you touch a theme
For large and leisurely discourse. At present
I will but say, the boldest of bold hearts
Is hither come in season.

ATHULF.

Say you so?
Come cowl and crosier! With a cap of steel
And battle-axe in hand, we will not fly.

But softly for a season! In what current
Runs the blood-royal? Are we where we were?

LEOLF.

O'er the Queen-Mother's mean and meagre soul
Hath monkery triumphed; taking for allies
Her past misdeeds and ever-present fears.
Upon the Princess too I see it steal,
And stain her pleasant purity of spirit.

ATHULF.

But still the King is staunch?

LEOLF.

Young, young and warm;
Prompt in defiance, too precipitate;
For we must have him crowned, or it be safe
To cross them. But the passion which in youth
Drives fast downhill, means that the impulse gained
Should speed us up the hill that's opposite.
How found you the mid-counties?

ATHULF.

Oh! Monk-ridden,
Raving of Dunstan.

LEOLF.

'Tis a raving time.

Mad monks, mad peasants; Dunstan is not sane,
And madness that doth least declare itself
Endangers most and ever most infects
The unsound many. See where stands that man,
And where this people: then compute the peril
To one and all. When force and cunning meet
Upon the confine of one cloudy mind,
When ignorance and knowledge halve the mass,
When night and day stand at an equinox,
Then storms are rife. Yet, once the King were crowned,
We could face Dunstan; which he knows too well,
And still by one thin pretext or another
Defers the coronation, and his will
The Primate follows.

ATHULF.

Upon Edwin's head
Before the crown must come the stout steel cap;
Is it not so?

LEOLF.

I see no other end;
And therefore, Athulf, in a happy hour
Com'st thou to Kingston. Ere the day be spent
We must take counsel with old Clarenbald.
You're strong in Wessex, and can thither send

To hold your strength in readiness. Meanwhile
Breathe not a word of menace; for at Court
The Monks have eyes and ears in every chamber,
And Kingston is beset by bands of theirs.

ATHULF.

Gramercy, Monks! I'll thunder in a whisper,
And say, God save the King! inaudibly,
That only heaven shall hear.—A truce to Kings,
To Monks, to madmen! Leolf, at my heart
There is a matter that sits closer far
Than state affairs. How thrive you with my sister?

LEOLF.

Indifferently. In sooth I hardly know.
We'll talk of that—but by your leave, hereafter.
Seek we the Chancellor now, and let your mind
Put off its soldierly habiliments,
And on its garb of policy, to meet
The wise old man.

ATHULF.

Off, idle hauberk, off!
Off, clattering sword! off, greave and gauntlet!—There!
Behold me politic! Old Clarenbald,
A serious politician comes to council.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

WARLEWOOD CHASE. EVENING.

DUNSTAN. (*Alone.*)

Spirit of speculation, rest, oh rest!
And push not from her place the spirit of prayer!
God, thou 'st given unto me a troubled being—
So move upon the face thereof, that light
May be, and be divided from the darkness!
Arm thou my soul that I may smite and chase
The spirit of that darkness, whom not I
But Thou thro' me compellest.—Mighty power,
Legions of piercing thoughts illuminate,
Hast Thou committed to my large command,
Weapons of light and radiant shafts of day,
And steeds that trample on the tumbling clouds.
But with them it hath pleased Thee to let mingle
Evil imaginations, corporal stings,
A host of Imps and Ethiops, dark doubts,
Suggestions of revolt.—Who is 't that dares—

Enter GURMO.

Oh! is it thou? What saith my Lord Archbishop?

GURMO.

He will be there.

DUNSTAN.

At Sheen to-morrow?

GURMO.

Yes.

DUNSTAN.

And what my Lady, the Queen Mother?

GURMO.

Here

To-night.

DUNSTAN.

I wished not she should come so soon.

No matter—let her choose—To-night then be it.

Go, get thee to the hollow of yon tree,

And bellow there as is thy wont.

GURMO.

How long?

DUNSTAN.

Till thy lungs crack. Get hence.

[*Exit* GURMO.

And if thou bellowest otherwise than Satan,
It is not for the lack of Satan's sway
'Stablished within thee.

[*Strange howls are heard from the tree.*

Well said, Satan! Ay!
Thou feel'st the red-hot pincers at thy nose.
And call'st thou this a fraud, thou secular lack-brain?
Thou loose lay-priest, I tell thee it is none.
Do I not battle wage in very deed
With Satan? Yea, and conquer! And who 's he
Saith falsehood is delivered in these howls,
Which do but to the vulgar ear translate
Truths else to them ineffable? Where 's Satan?
His presence, life and kingdom? Not the air
Nor bowels of the earth, nor central fires
His habitat exhibits; it is here,
Here in the heart of Man. And if from hence
I cast him with discomfiture, that truth
Is verily of the vulgar sense conceived,
By utterance symbolic, when they deem
That met in bodily oppugnancy
I tweak him by the snout. A fair belief
Wherein the fleshly and the palpable type

Doth of pure truth substantiate the essence.
Enough! Come down. The screech-owl from afar
Upbraids thy usurpation. Cease, I say.

GURMO *descends.*

Await me in the border of the forest,
By Elstan's well.

[*Exit* GURMO.

A sturdy knave is yon!
He has transacted murder in his time,
Yet will he walk in darkness through the forest
Nothing discomforted nor scared. Who next?
Ha! the Queen Mother!

[*Enter the* QUEEN MOTHER *in a Peasant's garb.*

Give your Grace good even!
You are a faithful servant of the Church,
And humbler weeds than these would gladly wear,
And wilder solitudes, by night or day,
Would seek to serve her.

THE QUEEN MOTHER.

Father, I am faint,
For a strange terror seized me by the way.
I pray you let me sit.

DUNSTAN.

I say, forbear!
Thou art in a Presence that thou wot'st not of,
Wherein no mortal may presume to sit.
If stand thou canst not, kneel.

[*She falls on her knees.*

THE QUEEN MOTHER.

Oh, merciful Heaven!
Oh, sinner that I am!

DUNSTAN.

Dismiss thy fears;
Thine errand is acceptable to Him
Who rules the hour, and thou art safer here
Than in thy palace. Quake not, but be calm,
And tell me of the wretched King, thy son.
This black, incestuous, unnatural love
For his blood-relative—yea, worse, a seed
That ever was at enmity with God—
His cousin of the house of Antichrist!
Is it as I surmised?

THE QUEEN MOTHER.

Alas! lost boy!

DUNSTAN.

Yea, lost for time and for eternity,
If he should wed her. But that shall not be.
Something more lofty than a boy's wild love
Governs the course of kingdoms. From beneath
This arching umbrage, step aside; look up;
The alphabet of Heaven is o'er thy head,
The starry literal multitude. To few,
And not in mercy, is it given to read
The mixed celestial cypher. Not in mercy,
Save as a penance merciful in issue,
Doth God impart that mournfullest of gifts
Which pushes farther into future time
The bounds of human foresight. Yonder book,
In mercy to the King and not to me,
Unfolds its tragic page. Is written there
Something that must be, something more that may,
But yet may be prevented.

THE QUEEN MOTHER.

On my knees,
I pray thee, holy Dunstan, read not there
Of ruin to my son.

DUNSTAN.

What there is writ
Needs must I read; and wiselier shouldst thou pray
That reading there of danger, I should read
Lessons of caution likewise, and impart
Means of prevention.

THE QUEEN MOTHER.

In thy holy hands
I place myself; thy bidding will I do
As knowing it is Heaven's.

DUNSTAN.

This wily wench
That profiting by the softness and green sap
Of ignorant youth, doth round her finger twine
The sceptre like a sliver—

THE QUEEN MOTHER.

Insolent jade!
Were it not, father, a good deed in Christ,
To have her—in a manner...say...removed?
For truly, truly I may say, my lord,
Yea and in sooth I witness it against her,
That with her witcheries and wanton looks
She hath inveigled and ensnared the King,

Bewitch'd past reason, that he flouts his mother,
Forgets his duty—woeful, woeful day!
Says 'Silence,' if I do but say 'God bless him!'
And all by her procurement and behest,
Scandalous minion! Were it not, I say,
An excellent deed and righteous before God,
To take her from his sight, that she should cease
To vex good men and holy with her wiles?

DUNSTAN.

With thee the cry is ever "Kill and Kill."
I tell thee once again, my soul abhors
This vulture's appetite, not more foul in act
Than gross in apprehension. Look we round:
In Wessex Athulf more prevails than we;
Leolf in Sussex; which of us is first
In Hampshire, hard to say. I tell thee, no;
It must not be.

THE QUEEN MOTHER.

Or but to mew her up...

DUNSTAN.

Nay, worse and worse; it were but to inflame
By opposition the boy's passionate will.

Now list the counsel which from Heaven and Earth,
Much reading of their signs and characters,
I learn, and bid thee follow. If less pure
In outward seeming than its sacred source,
Be not the less assured it is from God,
Who works through human frailties to good ends.
Mew not her up, nor yet be strict with him;
Withdraw your watch and ward—let the girl loose—
Loose access give the boy; so shall she fall,
And she so fallen, satiate appetite
Sickens on this side marriage and there an end.

THE QUEEN MOTHER.

My Lord . . . but what am I? Oh, my good Lord;
A poor weak woman! it is not for me . . .
But yet to give her way . . . Oh, infamous minx!
If she should prosper! . . .

DUNSTAN.

Fear it not; trust me.
In women's breasts the passions that are bred,
Which for a summer's season work their will,
As surely with the dangerous hour's approach
Rise like arm'd Helots raging, and are found

Of their worst enemies the best allies.
With—with a woman's passions, not against them,
He takes the field who wisely would pursue
Her ultimate overthrow.

THE QUEEN MOTHER.

Most true, my lord,
Most excellently true! Oh, man of God!
Command me always—it is Heaven's behest!
I will take order for the following out
Of thy intent.

DUNSTAN.

It is an easy task.
Have eyes that see not, ears that hear not, brains
That apprehend not. Let their wills run riot.
What other furtherance a woman's wit
To such an end as this may minister,
Be vigilant to use. Hark! hist! a Spirit!
Another—and a third. They're trooping up.

THE QUEEN MOTHER.

St. Magnus shield us!

DUNSTAN.

Thou art safe; but go;

The wood will soon be populous with Spirits.
The path thou cam'st retread. Who laughs i' the air?

Ecce crucem, spargere lucem,
Spiritûm Trias, pandite vias!

The way is open. To St. Elstan's well
I will attend thee, and there Gurmo waits.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

A CHAMBER IN THE PALACE.

Enter ATHULF *and* ELGIVA.

ELGIVA.

This is the chamber where the Council sits:
I leave thee here: the very rushes bristle,
Disdaining to be trodd'n by female feet.

ATHULF.

To meet at eight, the summons said. By this
They are at hand; but ere you go, one word.
I see a trouble sit on Leolf's brow.
Elgiva, oh my sister! art thou true?

ELGIVA.

Indeed, I am.

ATHULF.

And doth he know thee true?

ELGIVA.

I trust he knows the truth.

ATHULF.

The truth, Elgiva!

These are short answers. Dost thou love him still?

ELGIVA.

Sincerely and in truth and honesty
Have I dealt with him always, and do now.
I verily believed I loved him once.
I think I love him still.

ATHULF.

Alas! alas!

But not him only, no, nor yet him most.
Beware, my sister, that ambition's weeds
Choke not the garden where thy love should grow.
In Man, of questionable quality
Ambition has been holden; but in Woman—
Oh! 'tis the veriest beggary of the heart
That winter ever witnessed!

ELGIVA.

Athulf, no;

A weaker to a stronger love may yield;
But not in me will love, or weak or strong,
Yield to ambition ever.

ATHULF.

Oh, this head!
So shapely, and by nature so adorned!
Far rather would I see the glossy braid
Of its own golden tresses circle it
Than England's jewelled crown.

(*An* ATTENDANT, *who appears at the door, announces* "The Chancellor.")

Good night, Elgiva. Said'st thou, a stronger love?
The strength of love is constancy. Farewell!
As came the honey from the lion's carcase,
So sweetness comes of strength. Beware, I say;
Kings love like other men—or other boys:
Not so they marry.

[*Exit* ELGIVA.

Gone in anger! Well;
Reproof that vexed not never yet sank deep,
Nor ever of a warning that was welcome
Came needful caution. Tush! a woman's wrath.
And yet the very day that first we meet

To send her from me angry! Tush! to-morrow—
Had she but said, Good night!

Enter CLARENBALD.

CLARENBALD.

My Lord, well met!
If I be late, let them that are to come
Plead for me.

ATHULF.

Nay, you do but prove it true
That ever are the busiest the most punctual.

CLARENBALD.

Sir, they have leisure. Only frugal men
Are truly liberal, and for like cause
Will he that husbands time have time to spare.

Enter THE KING, *with* EARLS LEOLF, SIDROC, ALWINE, THE BISHOP OF ROCHESTER, *and two or three other Lords of the Council.*

EDWIN.

My Lords, we meet you here to be advised
Touching our coronation. My Lord Chancellor
Will set this thing before you.

CLARENBALD.

My good Lords,
What, if I err not, each of us with each

Hath weighed in several conference, The King's Grace
Commands me that I finally propound
For your collective sanction. From the West
Come tidings that the Monks of Glastonbury
(Doubtless apt implements of their Abbot they!)
Have practised with Prince Edgar in such sort
As hardly may decline the name of treason.
Whilst they this child's simplicity seduce,
Their brethren in the ignorant multitude
Work a persuasion that the King not crowned
Lacks half the warrant of his sovereignty,
Which till the Pope thro' them shall please bestow,
The kingdom is disposable. This creed
Spreads day by day, and till the King be crowned
Will daily breed new dangers. From the hands
Of my Lord Primate, neither crown nor chrism
By any instance can the King obtain:
Wherefore, my Lords, our counsel to his Grace
Methinks should be, that scattering like the sun
All clouds of hindrance and delay, at once
He should rise crowned, and on a summer's morn
Shine in the feeble faces of the monks
A consummated Monarch.

EDWIN.

And his aid
Will this true servant of the Church and State
Afford us [*turning to the* BISHOP OF ROCHESTER]
From whose pure and holy hands
Much rather than from that disloyal Odo's
Would we receive the Crown.

THE BISHOP OF ROCHESTER.

Most Royal Sir,
Much honoured were the See of Rochester,
More honoured still were these unworthy hands,
Should they perform the office.

EDWIN.

Sirs, your votes.
You, my Lord Heretoch, speak first.

LEOLF.

The time
Forces conclusions, and Necessity
Sits in the seat of Counsel. Dunstan gains
By every hour's delay, and with my will
Uncrowned your Majesty shall not remain
Beyond St. Austin's eve.

ATHULF.

All hail that eve!
Dunstan would rather Beelzebub were crowned.

SIDROC.

And Odo when he washed the Devil's feet
(Shame to him for his pains!) felt not his nose
So sorely troubled as his ears will be
To hear of this. Enough—St. Austin's eve
We're all agreed on.

THE REST. All.

LEOLF.

Then must all join
Their speediest with their wariest endeavour
To bring up forces.

CLARENBALD.

To this end, my Lords,
His Majesty will give you means to meet
In cover of the chase your chiefest friends,
And Wednesday he appoints a day of sport
For hunting of the boar. He then with us
Will lose himself, bewildered in the wood,
And others that shall likewise lose themselves
Shall find him, and in sylvan convocation

Shall all consult together and concert
The parts that each shall play.

EDWIN.

Agreed.

THE REST. Agreed.

EDWIN.

Then for this present, trusted friends, we part.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

ANOTHER CHAMBER IN THE PALACE.

ELGIVA AND ETHILDA.

ELGIVA.

How is it I find favour in the sight
Of the Queen Mother, and so suddenly?
When I was last at Court no word she spake
Of welcome by herself, the King, or thee.
Whence is the change?

ETHILDA.

I know not; but I know
That but one change in thee would work in us
All love that thou couldst wish. Oh, sweet Elgiva,

Restore thyself to God in his true Church,
And stray not in that howling wilderness
Where never is the voice of gladness heard,
Of bridegroom nor of bride.

ELGIVA.

My Royal Cousin,
'Tis thou that strayest in that wilderness.
Except amongst the Monks, I know not where
The voice is silenced of the bride and bridegroom.
I pray you be not factious for the Monks.
Ask Athulf—ask my brother. Have you seen him?
He came but yesterday.

ETHILDA.

I saw him not.

ELGIVA.

Oh, he is bright and jocund as the morn,
And there is not on earth that wilderness
Which he could not reclaim, and in its wastes
Detect the springs of fruitfulness and joy.

ETHILDA.

When last I saw him—ere he went to the West,
I was almost a child; but I remember
How wild he was with pleasantness and mirth.

I was gay then, although I seemed not so
Beside his bounding spirit. Is he now
Of the same temper?

ELGIVA.

Not so thoughtless now,
And more in broken lights; but Nature still
Predominates, whose revels in his heart
Hardly can care suspend.

Enter EDWIN.

EDWIN.

Oh, this is kind!
You know not, my fair cousin, what a cloud
Came over all the Court when you were gone;
It was as dreary as a city churchyard.
Now we shall smile again.

Enter an USHER.

USHER.

Her Majesty
Prepares for her devotions, and bade say
She waits the Princess. [*Exit.*

ETHILDA.

For this night, adieu.

[*Exit.*

ELGIVA.

Adieu, good night, sweet kind Ethilda!

EDWIN.

Yes;

Kind is she always; she is kind to stay
Ever, when you are absent, by my side,
And also kind to go when you are here.

ELGIVA.

Your Majesty . . .

EDWIN.

We are alone, Elgiva;
Oh, how I hate my title in your mouth.
Rather than speak as in the audience-chamber,
Let us be children once again, to rove
O'er hill, through vale, with interlacing arms,
And thrid the thickets where wild roses grow
Entangled with each other like ourselves.
Can you, and will you, those sweet days remember,
And strive to bring them back?

ELGIVA.

Those days—Oh, Edwin!. . .
Can I remember? When can I forget them?
When flowers forget to blow and birds to sing,

And clouds to kindle in the May-day dawn,
And every spring-tide sight and sound shall cease,
Or cease for me, then too for me shall cease
The sweet remembrance of the tender joys,
The smiles, the tears of those delightful days.

EDWIN.

And can they not repeat themselves? Again
Let us, though grown, be children in our hearts.
Then with the freedom and the innocence
Which led our childish steps we'll wander on
Through after life, but with a fuller joy.
Let recollections of the past, if sweet,
Plead sweetly for the present.

ELGIVA.

Edwin, Edwin!
You are a King.

EDWIN.

Now, see! I've summoned up,
Like a magician whose strong spell evokes
A beautiful spirit, the spirit of the past,
And bid it speak, and prophesy, and plead;
And, lo! it nothing answers but the words
The Herald spake, when o'er my father's grave

He brake his wand of office. I am a King,
But may not Kings be happy? May Kings not love?

ELGIVA.

They must be more than resolute to be safe
In loving whom they will; they must be wary.
The Monks are enemies that Kings may fear,
Though of the bravest, and my father's House
Is hateful in their sight.

EDWIN.

Nay, talk not of them;
I loathe this monkery, and if I live
Will root it from my realm.

ELGIVA.

Oh that you may!
And Earls not few, and many a gallant Thane,
Would gladly in that cause their heart's best blood
Pour out like water. Athulf is but one,
Yet if you knew him is he many's worth.

EDWIN.

If more of him I know not, yet that much
I amply know. Then surely with his aid
We may defy the monks, or, better still,
We may forget them, ay, forget the world,

Its cares, its kingdoms, and unbank the hours
To that soft overflow which bids the heart
Yield increase of delight. Beloved Elgiva,
Thy beauty o'er the earth a passion breathes
Which softly sweeping through me, brings one tone
From all this plural being, as the wind
From yonder sycamore, whose thousand leaves
With lavish play to one soft music moved
Tremble and sigh together.

ELGIVA.

What a charm
The neighbouring grove to this lone chamber lends!
I've loved it from my childhood. How long since
Is it that standing in this compass'd window
The blackbird sang us forth; from yonder bough
That hides the arbour, loud and full at first
Warbling his invitations, then with pause
And fraction fitfully as evening fell,
The while the rooks, a spotty multitude,
Far distant crept across the amber sky.
But hark! what strain is this? No blackbird's song,
Nor sighing of the sycamore!

EDWIN.

Some friend,

As if the key-note of our hearts divining,
Accordant music ministers. Hist! Hist!

(*A Song from without.*)

God speed thee, false day,
With thy gauds and thy splendour;
Thy glare frights away
All that's truthful and tender.

Give place then above
To the star that of old
Lit the glances of Love
When his secret was told.

ELGIVA.

It dies away.

EDWIN.

It is but distant more.

(*Song resumed.*)

On the bosom of Night
Lie the tresses of Truth,
But its moments take flight
With the light steps of Youth.

Make the most of the least,
For too soon comes the warning,
When announced in the East
Is the grey-headed Morning.

EDWIN.

Come, follow it; but, stop—let me leap down
And help you from the window-sill. So quick!
If you are light of foot as Atalanta,
You ought like her to give your Love the start.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter the QUEEN MOTHER *and* DUNSTAN *from opposite sides.*

THE QUEEN MOTHER.

So, well—so, well—what more? 'Tis even so!
What more? But saw ye—Mercy on my soul!
But, ah! my good Lord Abbot . . . What remains?

DUNSTAN.

Madam, to bed; and let no light be seen,
Nor any voice be heard in bower or hall.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.

A COURT IN FRONT OF THE PALACE.

Enter the CHIEF HUNTSMAN *followed by other Huntsmen, a* BUGLEMAN, *and Hounds.*

CHIEF HUNTSMAN.

What! none astir? By the Lord! the King lies long:
Young blood, sirs—ay, it tingles when it wakes,
And yet it sleeps the soundest. Ranger! Churl!
What! down, sir, down! Oh, flatteries of dogs!
We're courtiers all. Come, Uthric, where 's thy horn?
We'll sound them a reveillée.

BUGLEMAN.

By the mass!
I wheeze to-day as who cries, 'Bellows to mend!'
I'm out of breath with snoring. But no matter;
Here is a puff on't left.

(*Winds his horn.*)

CHIEF HUNTSMAN.

Why, so! that's well.

BUGLEMAN.

Another whiff, then.

SECOND HUNTSMAN.

Prithee, wake not the moon;
'Tis but a half hour gone since she turned pale
And went to bed.

THIRD HUNTSMAN.

This dog is full of fleas.

SECOND HUNTSMAN.

Excuse him; he has been amongst the monks.

(*Horn winds.*)

CHIEF HUNTSMAN.

Who 's here? Earl Sidroc. You are first, my lord.

Enter EARL SIDROC.

SIDROC.

I'm risen this hour; a snuff of the dawn for me!
My nose doth love it better than a nosegay.

CHIEF HUNTSMAN.

Right, my good lord. You see her there, sir—Elf;
Oh, the best bitch! She holds them all together;
Relay or vauntlay 'tis the same to her;
Endways she runs it still and orderly.

SIDROC.

She is a good one. Sound another call.
To keep the King's dogs waiting is unmannerly.

BUGLEMAN.

Most true, my Lord !—I am not what I was !
Plague of this asthma ! Better have the mange !

(*Winds a rechcat.*)

Enter ATHULF, *followed by a Page.*

ATHULF.

Set forward with the dogs—the King desires it.

[*Exeunt* CHIEF HUNTSMAN *and his train.*

And hark ye, we shall hunt to-morrow too ;
Here—boy ! Tell whom it may concern, to-morrow
The King gives leave that I should ride Greymalkin.
I'll wear my hunting suit of green and gold.
See that Greymalkin is brought here betimes,
For we start early.—Grace be with thy thoughts,
And peace with grace, and joy be with thy heart,
Sidroc the sober !—Go thy way, my boy.

[*Exit* PAGE.

Hast thou a moral ready ? Come, a moral.

SIDROC.

For what ? Greymalkin, or the green and gold ?

ATHULF.

Neither—they serve—they come but second now—
Appliance—means.

SIDROC.

No more—why that is well.

ATHULF.

Am I a coxcomb ?

SIDROC.

Who can answer that ?

Thou wast not yesterday ; but lo ! at Court
If but a man shall stoop his head a minute,
Leaps a bespangled monkey on his back
And grins at all beholders.

ATHULF.

Oh, my soul !

Be not coxcomical I beg of thee !
For I am lifted in mine own conceit,
That is most certain.

SIDROC.

I lament thy rise.

But come—discourse it orderly ; by what beck
Of Fortune's crookedest finger wast thou led
Up this ridiculous ascent ? The King ?
Some special favour ?

ATHULF.

Pooh ! The King is kind,

But that is nothing.

SIDROC.

Nothing good, I grant you.
The sun that striking in upon thine hearth
Puts out thy fire, may yet too weakly shine
Itself to yield thee warmth: True, you say well,
The King is nothing. What less chilling light
Has beamed upon thy fancy?

ATHULF.

By my soul,
I know not that I shall not be ashamed
To tell my story. As I went to Court
Late yesterday, the Queen, who saw me, sent
Commanding my attendance. A long hour
I waited, conning in the Troy-Town Chamber
The stories in the tapestry, when appeared
The Princess, with that merry child Prince Guy.
He loves me well, and made her stop and sit,
And sate upon her knee, and it so chanced
That in his various chatter he denied
That I could hold his hand within mine own
So closely as to hide it; this being tried
Was proved against him; he insisted then
I could not by his royal sister's hand

Do likewise : Starting at the random word
And dumb with trepidation, there I stood
Some seconds as bewitched ; then I looked up
And in her face beheld an orient flush
Of half-bewildered pleasure : from which trance
She with an instant ease resumed herself,
And frankly with a pleasant laugh held out
Her arrowy hand.

SIDROC.

What could she less ? a hand
To have and hold is something ; but to hold
And not to have—but end your tale—this hand—

ATHULF.

I thought it trembled as it lay in mine,
But yet her looks were clear, direct, and free,
And said that she felt nothing.

SIDROC.

What felt'st thou ?

ATHULF.

A sort of swarming, curling, tremulous tumbling,
As though there were an ant-hill in my bosom.
—I said I was ashamed.—Sidroc, you smile ;
If at my folly, well ! But if you smile

Suspicious of a taint upon my heart,
Wide is your error and you never loved.

SIDROC.

Well, but proceed, I pray you. Of this hand
The issue in experiment? the proof?
This lesser quantity—this *in majore*—
Was it containable?

ATHULF.

I proved it not.
More manly, wise and courteous I deemed it
Not to press hard an opportunity
Or wring it dry, but something leave behind
In warrant that no greedy grasping heart
Was mine, that on a light and trivial token
Feeding might grow in self-encouragement
Too fast to fatness.

SIDROC.

I conceive your counsel;
Not all devouring was your policy;
Something you left for bait.

ATHULF.

'Twas not in craft.

SIDROC.

Your pardon ; in myself it would have been ;
But let me not misjudge thee by myself ;
For by a happy instinct art thou led
Unerringly and unsuspiciously,
When timid craft, too wary to be wise,
Would swerve for lack of blinkers.

ATHULF.

Here 's the King.

SIDROC.

Ay, and a lady with him—Room—make room.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter EDWIN *and* ELGIVA *attired for the chase.*

ELGIVA.

Remember that a king can take no step
That shall not measured be by rule and square
Of some too curious eye that follows him.

EDWIN.

We will be careful. Shall I tell thee, Love ?
The grim Archbishop came to me last night,
And with him Dunstan, and oh, Heaven and Earth,
They preached me dead !

ELGIVA.

What was it that they preached?

EDWIN.

'Alas, a thousand things! They said my crown
Was not a myrtle-wreath, and kings were called,
As fathers of their leiges, to affect
All equally and favour none, nor loves
Nor friendships ever to permit themselves,
Save as commended to their royal hearts
By counsels grounded in state policy.

ELGIVA.

Oh! insolence of Churchmen! What a gift
Of meddling is in Monks! What answer made you?

EDWIN.

I said, "Lord Abbot, and my Lord Archbishop,
My crown, of myrtle whether it may be,
Or as your hearts would have it, sirs, of thorns,
I wear not at your will, and with God's help
I trust that I shall friendship find and love,
Counsel and policy more kind and sage
Than yours, my Lord Archbishop, or than yours,
Lord Abbot Dunstan.'

ELGIVA.

I am glad you spake
So frankly and so nobly—glad at heart!

EDWIN.

Lo! who comes here? 'Tis Dunstan, by my life!

ELGIVA.

And who is he behind?

EDWIN.

Gurmo he is called.
'Tis a blue, swollen, unwholesome-looking knave,
That ever follows him as plague doth famine.

ELGIVA.

Let 's seem to see them not and wend our way.

[*Exeunt* EDWIN *and* ELGIVA.

Enter DUNSTAN *and* GURMO.

DUNSTAN.

Into the arbour—well!

GURMO.

I saw no more.

DUNSTAN.

Lo there! a lovely couple hand in hand,
But which of them is male . . . What! nothing more?

GURMO.

The holly-bushes hid them.

DUNSTAN.

From thine eye;

But did no inward vision paint their pranks?

Go—I were better deal with Sathanas!

Thou hast all tokens of an Evil Spirit

Except his knowledge.

GURMO.

They were hid by the bush.

DUNSTAN.

I tell thee, not from me; for in my cell

I burnt a light that showed them. Go to the Queen;

Bid her to join me at my Lord Archbishop's.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII.

A FOREST.

THE KING, ATHULF *and* LEOLF, *the* CHANCELLOR CLARENBALD, *the* BISHOP OF ROCHESTER, *and divers Earls and Thanes.*

CLARENBALD.

To this then cleaving, let us bind ourselves
By oath: so having in our hearts the will,
There shall the conscience clench it. My Lord Bishop
The oath administers.

LEOLF.

This tree supplies
The sacred symbol.

(*Breaks two twigs from a tree, and transfixes them cross-wise with the point of his sword, which he then presents to the* BISHOP.)

THE BISHOP OF ROCHESTER.

(*Holding forth the cross to the surrounding Nobles, who kneel and bow their heads towards it.*)

On Austin's eve to crown your rightful King
Ye swear! If peril of your lands or life
Should stand between, ye swear of life and land

To take no count; but putting trust in Him
From whom the rights of Kings are derivate,
In its own blood to trample treason out,
And loyalty in liberty to raise.
This on this cross ye swear!

ALL.

We swear! We swear!

EDWIN.

And now my lieges, lords and friends, adieu!
In very deed I thank you from my soul;
For in your looks I read that not alone
A common purpose joins you hand with hand,
But likewise that confederate hearts are here.
I thank you, sirs; adieu!

CLARENBALD.

Disperse yourselves
In twos and threes; so severally seen
You will not prompt suspicion.

[*Exeunt all but* ATHULF *and* LEOLF.

LEOLF.

Athulf, stay.
I am for Sussex, there to raise my power.

ATHULF.

Your Seneschal is there; what needs yourself?

LEOLF.

Nor you nor I can longer blind ourselves.
I am needed nowhere.

ATHULF.

Leolf, on my soul
What I do see, I see with grief and shame.

LEOLF.

Reproach her not; she is a child in years,
And though in wit a woman, yet her heart,
Untempered by the discipline of pain,
Is fancy-led. One half the fault was mine.
She is a child; and, look—upon my head
Already peepeth out the willowy grey.
My youth is wearing from me.

ATHULF.

Nay, not so.

LEOLF.

And youth and sovereignty, with furtherance fair
Of a seductive beauty in the boy,
What could they but prevail!

ATHULF.

No child is she;

And if she were, is childhood then so false?
She is weak of heart.

LEOLF.

No more. For Hastings I!
No more—or, Athulf, but one word—but one—
To her I would not say it, but to thee,
My friend in all fidelity approved!
I—Athulf, she is gone from me for ever!...
But this remains... I can devote my life
To serve her and protect her... broken hearts
Have service in them still—Oh, more than strength
Is in the sad idolatry that haunts
The ruinous fane of their deserted faith!
I can adore her, serve her, shield her, die...
I pray you pardon me... Is shame no more?
I should be silent, for I am not licensed
To either dotage—that of youth nor age.

ATHULF.

Oh, Leolf! oh, my friend!

LEOLF.

Quit we the theme.

But from my griefs and me this counsel take:
Expend the passion of thy heart in youth;
Fight thy love-battles whilst thy heart is strong,
And wounds heal kindlily. An April frost
Is sharp, but kills not; sad October's storm
Strikes when the juices and the vital sap
Are ebbing from the leaf. No more! My men
Shall stand in readiness; but for myself,
Unless a martial opposition call,
I would the King might please to pardon me,
If I appear not on St. Austin's eve.

ATHULF.

I'll say that you are shaken in your health:
This shall suffice—I would it were less true.

LEOLF.

You'll hear, and that ere long, my native air
Hath done its work restorative. Farewell.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII.

IN THE PALACE.

The KING *and* CLARENBALD.

CLARENBALD.

I swear such terror did I never see
Amongst a King's retainers! My old blood
Sprang to my wrinkles, where it had not been
These fifty years! One said that he was sick;
Another's wife was dead; a third would go,
But he must have a warrant signed and sealed.
'Good carpet-knights!' quoth I, 'not one of you
Shall do this errand; for a fainting will,
A gasping utterance and a frightened face
Shall not be bearers of the King's commands
To Dunstan.'

EDWIN.

You said well; no timorous heart
Shall figure me in this.

CLARENBALD.

To do them right,
They'd charge a Northman in his coat of proof

And flinch not; but this Shaveling's meagre face,
With his mass-hackle and his reef and stole,
Puts all to flight.

EDWIN.

Lo! here's my cousin Athulf.
Ask him to go.

Enter ATHULF.

CLARENBALD.

My lord, well met! The King
Would wish his pleasure signified to Dunstan
Touching his coronation. Some there be
That blink the service, lest through sorceries
And conjurations of the villanous Abbot,
A curse should cross them; but thy brain, we know,
Brooks not such vain bewilderments.

ATHULF.

I vow,
Meat to my mouth goes not with better speed
Than I upon this errand.

CLARENBALD.

Excellent!
Abounding in all fortitude of soul
I ever knew you. Here's St. Tibba's thumb,

A relic of much price, which ne'er till now
Was parted from me; put it in your vest,
And heartily we bid you well to fare.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IX.

A CORRIDOR IN A MONASTERY AT SHEEN.

TWO MONKS.

FIRST MONK.

He slept two hours—no more; then raised his head,
And said 'Methinks it raineth.'

SECOND MONK.

Twice he coughed,
And then he spat.

FIRST MONK.

He raised himself, and said,
'Methinks it raineth'—pointing with his hand.
The word was even as though an Angel's tongue
Had spoken, and when I looked, it rained apace.

SECOND MONK.

Against such blows what body of mortal man
Could e'er hold out? He 's on the way to heaven

Unless he deal more mildly with his flesh.
He coughed and spat, and labouringly as 'twere.

FIRST MONK.

He raised his body—which is just his bones—
Upon one hand, and with the other pointed.
And Father Bridferth met me in the Court,
And quoth he, 'Hast thou seen the holy Dunstan?'
I answered 'Yes, and on his wasted hand
There were red stains caught from the nightly scourge.'

SECOND MONK.

Nightly and daily, Brother. At this hour
He plies it for a double 'De Profundis.'
As I passed out, the Primate came, and said,
'Is the Lord Abbot risen?' And I replied,
'My Lord, he is.'

Enter ATHULF, *attended by the King's Jester*, GRIMBALD.

ATHULF.

God save you, holy Sirs!
Is Father Dunstan here?

SECOND MONK.

My son, he is.
He rose at five. I gave him his hair-shirt.

FIRST MONK.

At four he called for me, and sate upright,
And on his hand, that when he raised himself
Was pointed outward—so—

ATHULF.

I pray you tell him,
Earl Athulf, on an errand from the King,
Would be beholden to his courtesy
For some three minutes of his time.

SECOND MONK.

My Lord,
Unless your business be of instant haste
He hardly will bestow himself so early
On aught of secular concernment.

ATHULF.

No?
But, sirs, it is in haste—in haste extreme—
Matters of State, and hot with haste.

SECOND MONK.

My Lord,
We will so say, but truly at this present
He is about to scourge himself.

ATHULF.

I'll wait.

For a King's ransom would I not cut short
So good a work! I pray you, for how long?

SECOND MONK.

For twice the 'De Profundis'—sung in slow time.

ATHULF.

Please him to make it ten times, I will wait.
And could I be of use, this knotted trifle,
This dog-whip here, has oft been worse employed.

FIRST MONK.

My Lord, we'll bring you to the room where stand
The poor, whose feet he washes after penance,
Whence you may see him in the oratory
Plying the blood-stained scourge. Tread softly, Sirs,
For he were not well pleased should he discover
That stranger's eyes beheld him.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE X.

AN ORATORY.

DUNSTAN, *in a shirt of sackcloth stained with blood, reclines on a pallet of straw.* ODO *stands near him. Two Choristers are closing their books.*

ODO.

How farest thou, Brother?

DUNSTAN.

Brother, weak in flesh
But strong of spirit. Choristers, retire.

[*Exeunt Choristers.*

Brother, behoves us to compel our thoughts
An instant from above, and on this world,
Its temporalities and secular cares,
Turn them, so long averted. Say, in brief,
What tidings hear'st thou?

ODO.

Still a gathering round
Of the King's forces, trooping to the call
Of Rehoboam's councillor, rash Earl Athulf.

DUNSTAN.

Son of perdition, he affronts his fate!
But there are more than he?

ODO.

At Hastings still
Earl Leolf stands aloof; but holds his power
In present preparation.

DUNSTAN.

Brother, lo!
With blasting and with mildew shall they perish!
With madness, blindness, and astonishment
Shall they be smitten, the young man and the virgin,
Terror within them and a sword without!
One way against us shall their host come forth,
And seven ways flee before us.—What is this?

ATHULF *is heard without, singing:*

Sinks the sun with a smile,
Though his heart's in his mouth,
And night comes the while
With a sigh from the South.

Like them, Love, are you,
In your coming and flying;
For you smiled me Adieu,
And you welcome me sighing.

DUNSTAN.

What mumming knave is here?—Brother, I say,
Their host shall flee, the anger of the Just
Shall smoke against them.—Nay, again! What, ho!

GRIMBALD *is heard without, singing:*

There was a maid that was a jade,
Four lovers true had she;
One did so dote, that he cut his own throat,
And she poisoned the other three.

DUNSTAN.

What, ho! are we attended? Are there none
To keep the precincts?

GRIMBALD'S *song continued.*

From this we learn to see and discern,
Nor hotly to desire
A maid whose store of lovers is more
Than her just needs require.

Enter BRIDFERTH (DUNSTAN'S *Chaplain*).

DUNSTAN.

What vile noise is this
Of juggling mountebanks that bellow and sing?

BRIDFERTH.

My lord, Earl Athulf, from his Majesty,

Attended by his Majesty's chief jester,
Expects the end of your observances,
And entertains his patience.

ODO.

Insolent scoffer!

DUNSTAN.

The King hath sent him? Nay then, bring him here.

[*Exit* BRIDFERTH.

ODO.

Attended by a jester! Is 't not monstrous?
The jester shall to prison, if not the Earl.
He shall be whipped, and make a jest of that.

DUNSTAN.

Brother, not so. A grave occasion this,
Which calls us to account, and bids be still
All outward flourishes of empty anger.
Far looks the present hour, and sees beyond
A fertile future. Brother, in our brains,
Not in our bloods, are we to seek the seeds
Wherewith to sow it.

Enter ATHULF.

Welcome, sir, to Sheen!

ATHULF.

My Lord Archbishop, and my good Lord Abbot,

I crave your blessing. Summons from the King
I bring you both, that you attend the Court
At Kingston, on St. Austin's eve, to grace
His coronation, and therein perform
Each your fit function: then and there, Lord Primate,
You shall anoint him King, and you, my Lord,
As is your right, shall with the golden spurs
Adorn and illustrate the royal heels.

DUNSTAN.

Sir Earl, all rights that in the Church reside,
And in ourselves, at all times stand we prompt
To exercise; and on St. Austin's eve,
Obedient alway to the King—next God—
As He shall give us guidance shall we walk.

ATHULF.

I will so say. The King expects your aid,
But in default thereof, his head and heels
Will punctually upon St. Austin's eve
Be otherwise attended. Fare you well!

[*Exit.*

DUNSTAN.

Ho, ho! Sir Earl; say'st thou St. Austin's eve?
Look to thy sister!

ODO.

Nay, it shall not be.

DUNSTAN.

The wedding shall not ; for the rest compound.
If, as their wanton bearing seems to boast,
It cannot be withstood, lo ! give it way.
This weakling, Edwin, from the arms escaped
Of Ethbaal's daughter, the Zidonian quean,
As amiably shall answer to our call
As a tame culver.

ODO.

Were he but escaped !

DUNSTAN.

As with gross appetite he now enjoys
(If insight fail me not) the all of folly,
So shall we see him soon agape for change,
Loathing his love foregone. Yield, brother, yield.
Yet hold your force the while not less alert
To answer each event. Be armed within,
Be gowned without. Good Brother, yield, but stand.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

LEOLF'S CASTLE, IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF HASTINGS.

EMMA, *alone.*

EMMA.

He walks upon the beach. A mind perturbed
Shall find the sea companionable. His
Is sorely troubled or my comment errs,
That is not uninspired. Oh, dearest Leolf!
You see not me with love-discerning eyes,
As I see you, or you would pity me.
When last I saw you, stately was your strength,
And you are now a very noble ruin.
Might I but be the wild flower on the wall
Of that war-wasted tower! A weed, alas!
But with a perfume.—Were I but at Court
Soon should I see what currents cross him there.

The King? And if it be . . . Here 's my soft slave.
Now to your work, my plotting scheming brains,
And I shall thrive.

Enter ERNWAY.

Well, Ernway, friend, what cheer?

ERNWAY.

I thank you, I am well in health. My heart
Is heavy, as you know.

EMMA.

'Tis a good heart;
But pitch me overboard this sand and gravel.
With a light heart a meagre wit may pass;
Or with a copious wit a heavy heart;
But when the ship that 's vacant of a freight
Labours with nothing but the dead-weight . . .

ERNWAY.

Hush!
Although you love me not, you should not scorn me,
Lest some day you be scorned yourself.

EMMA.

'Tis true;
I should be gentle; and, good faith! I love you,
Not amorously, I own, but amicably.

You are a kind and most affectionate fool,
And beautiful besides. I love your eyes,
Your hair, your mouth, your chin. I love you piece-meal;
I love your softness, gracefulness, and warmth;
And putting you together, on the whole
I like to see you at my heart's gate sit,
Upon a winter's day, and toss you crumbs.
Such is my friendship, and this many a day
I have not taxed you for returns. But now . . .

ERNWAY.

What can I do?

EMMA.

What will you?

ERNWAY.

Nay, what not?
If my weak wit, that you despise so much,
Can compass it, I'll do it.

EMMA.

Will you tell lies?

ERNWAY.

For you I will: I would not for myself.

EMMA.

Thou art a virtuous youth and loving liar.

'Tis better than to be a lying lover;
And yet not good—and would you not be good?

ERNWAY.

As good as you—no better.

EMMA.

I your conscience!

'Tis much to have one soul to answer for!
Yet will I make you sin. As good as I?
I am a liar and a cheat. Now say—
Will you be like me?

ERNWAY.

I have said I will.

EMMA.

You will get nothing for it.

ERNWAY.

Not a smile?

EMMA.

A smile at most—assuredly not more.

ERNWAY.

I am content to lie and cheat for that.

EMMA.

You come from Court. There 's much of service there
Is of that kind and in that coin requited.

Now you will instantly to Court again,
And for the service you can do—'tis this,
To take me with you.

ERNWAY.

I would kneel for years
But for the blessing of a morning dream
That told me you would ask me this in earnest.

EMMA.

I tell you, you shall do it. But there 's more.
Think not that I will let the word go forth
That I have wandered from my home with you
Unwedded. You must say we're man and wife.

ERNWAY.

And will you marry me?

EMMA.

What I? Oh, no.

ERNWAY.

At last you will.

EMMA.

No, neither last nor first.

ERNWAY.

Well, I will fancy that you will; of that
You cannot hinder me.

EMMA.

Indeed I can ;
And if your fancy once should err so far,
I will disforest its demesne for ever
That nothing wild or free shall wander there ;
Dispark its parks, dismantle and destroy
Its cloud-built castles. You are to present
The shadow of a husband—nothing more,
And this but for a season. Oh ! my heart !
Dear Ernway, I will not torment you much ;
And, sooth to say, I'm sorry for your pain.
To-morrow, for a sin you've not committed
I'll teach you to entreat a false forgiveness.
You must ask pardon of your worthy sire
For a clandestine marriage. He will storm,
But heed him not. There, you may kiss my hand ;
And now, I pray you, go.

ERNWAY.

Good bye, sweet Emma.

EMMA.

Call me 'Dear Wife'—'Sweet Emma' is too loving;
'Tis an unmarried phrase ; whereas 'Dear Wife'
Imports the decencies of dry affection.

ERNWAY.

No, I will say, 'Sweet Emma.'

EMMA.

What you will

When we're alone. Come with me to the beach.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

THE SEA-SHORE, NEAR HASTINGS.

LEOLF, *alone.*

LEOLF.

Rocks that beheld my boyhood! Perilous shelf
That nursed my infant courage! Once again
I stand before you—not as in other days
In your grey faces smiling—but like you
The worse for weather. Here again I stand,
Again and on the solitary shore
Old ocean plays as on an instrument,
Making that ancient music, when not known?
That ancient music only not so old
As He who parted ocean from dry land
And saw that it was good. Upon my ear,

As in the season of susceptive youth,
The mellow murmur falls—but finds the sense
Dulled by distemper; shall I say—by time?
Enough in action has my life been spent
Through the past decade, to rebate the edge
Of early sensibility. The sun
Rides high, and on the thoroughfares of life
I find myself a man in middle age,
Busy and hard to please. The sun shall soon
Dip westerly,—but oh! how little like
Are life's two twilights! Would the last were first
And the first last! that so we might be soothed
Upon the thoroughfares of busy life
Beneath the noon-day sun, with hope of joy
Fresh as the morn,—with hope of breaking lights,
Illuminated mists and spangled lawns
And woodland orisons and unfolding flowers,
As things in expectation.—Weak of faith!
Is not the course of earthly outlook, thus
Reversed from Hope, an argument to Hope
That she was licensed to the heart of man
For other than for earthly contemplations,
In that observatory domiciled

For survey of the stars? The night descends,
They sparkle out.—Who comes? 'Tis Wulfstan's daughter.

Enter EMMA.

EMMA (*to* ERNWAY *in the side-scene*).

Go now, and bring my father.—Good my Lord,
I fear you 've fallen in love with solitude.

LEOLF.

A growing weakness—not so tyrannous yet
But that I still can welcome from my heart
My pretty friend.

EMMA.

I thank you, my good Lord.

LEOLF.

You find me here discoursing to the sea
Of ebbs and flows; explaining to the rocks
How from the excavating tide they win
A voice poetic, solacing though sad,
Which when the passionate winds revisit them
Gives utterance to the injuries of time.
Poets, I told them, are thus made.

EMMA.

My Lord,

It is not thus through injury, I would hope,
That you are made poetical?

LEOLF.

Indeed
There 's much that has gone wrong with me, my friend.
How wears the world with you?

EMMA.

Truly, my Lord,
I see so little of it, I thank God!
That like a wedding-garment seldom used
It keeps its shine.

LEOLF.

Why, then, the world wears well:
But where 's the wedding-garment?

EMMA.

Why, my Lord,
'Tis here—for I was married as you see me.

LEOLF.

Was married, say you?

EMMA.

Yes, my Lord, last week;
O' Wednesday, God forgive me!

LEOLF.

This is strange!

I pray you say to whom?

EMMA.

Alack, my Lord!

To a poor foolish follower of your Lordship's—

Poor Erriway.

LEOLF.

What! to him!

EMMA.

For fault of better.

Maids that are beggars cannot, you know, be choosers.

LEOLF.

Well, if you like him I am glad you have him,

And I will mend his fortunes for your sake.

EMMA.

I care not for his fortunes. Oh, my Lord!

Your pardon! But I care for nothing now

Save only this,—that you should break the news

To my dear father, and on my behalf

Crave his forgiveness; for he dreams not of it.

LEOLF.

He will but dream when he has heard it. Still

This life, and all that it contains, to him

Is but a tissue of illuminous dreams
Filled with book-wisdom, pictured thought, and love
That on its own creations spends itself.
All things he understands, and nothing does.
Profusely eloquent in copious praise
Of action, he will talk to you as one
Whose wisdom lay in dealings and transactions;
Yet so much action as might tie his shoe
Cannot his will command; himself alone
By his own wisdom not a jot the gainer.
Of silence, and the hundred thousand things
'Tis better not to mention, he will speak,
And still most wisely.—But, behold! he comes,
Led by your bridegroom, (is it not?) who now
Runs back.

EMMA.

Some fifty yards he has to come,
And holding us before him full in sight,
It may be he will find his way to join us.
But lest he wander and forget himself,
I will conduct him hither. [*Exit.*

LEOLF.

Is it not strange

That such a maid should so bestow herself?
But with her courage and her confidence,
Her soft sagacity and ready wit,
Mixes the woman's weakness. For the sire,
He will but aptly moralise the theme,
And then forget the fact.

Enter EMMA *with* WULFSTAN THE WISE.

WULFSTAN.

For from his youth
His converse hath been profitable; yea,
In teaching him instruction made rebound,
And I was wiser for my pains. In truth,
I have considered and have studied him,
With, peradventure, more of curious care
And critical inquiry than befits
A friend so inward; and I'll vouch for this,
That though, as you have said, the vernal bloom
Of his first spirits fading leaves him changed,
'Tis not to worse. His mind is as a meadow
Of various grasses, rich and fresh beneath,
But o'er the surface some that come to seed
Have cast a colour of sobriety.
For he was ever . .

EMMA.

But, my dearest father,
He stands before you. [*Exit.*

WULFSTAN.

By my life, 'tis true!
Well met, my good Lord and my excellent friend!
My daughter warns me of some tiding strange,
Surprising, unimaginable, by you
To be delivered.

LEOLF.

Strange you needs must think it.
But should it grieve you, call to mind, I pray,
The precept I have heard a thousand times
From your own lips: philosophy, you said,
If ministering not to practice, were more vain
Than a child's rattle, for the infant's mind
The rattle doth in practice hold at rest.

WULFSTAN.

'Tis true; for just philosophy and practice
Are of correlative dependency,
Neither without the other apt or sound
Or certain. For philosophy itself
Smacks of the age it lives in, nor is true

Save by the apposition of the present.
And truths of olden time, though truths they be
And living through all time eternal truths,
Yet want the seasoning and applying hand
Which Nature sends successive. Else the need
Of wisdom should wear out and wisdom cease,
Since needless wisdom were not to be wise.
For surely if . . . .

LEOLF.

The theme I have to broach
Respects a certain marriage, which for my sake,
Though it will certes take you unprepared,
Yet you must leniently look upon
And auspicate with smiles.

WULFSTAN.

A marriage say you?
My good Lord, I rejoice in your resolve.
To marry wisely is to double wisdom,
And breed a progeny of bright rewards,
Which wisdom single, monachal or lay,
Woefully wants. For think what it must be
To watch in solitude our own decay,
Jealously asking of our observation

If ears, or eyes, or brains, or body fail,
And not to see the while new bodies, brains,
New eyes, new ears, about us springing fresh,
And to ourselves more precious than are ours.
And this it is . . . . .

LEOLF.

I give you my consent
That a wise marriage is the crowning act
Which queenly Wisdom's sovereignty secures;
For love is wisdom, when 'tis innocent:
But for myself . . . . .

WULFSTAN.

The season comes with you
When love that 's innocent may well be wise.
But not inevitably one with wisdom
Is innocent love at all times and with all.
Love changes with the changing life of man:
In its first youth, sufficient to itself,
Heedless of all beside, it reigns alone,
Revels or storms, and spends itself in passion.
In middle-age,—a garden through whose soil
The roots of neighbouring forest trees have crept,—
It strikes on stringy customs bedded deep,

Perhaps on alien passions ; still it grows
And lacks not force nor freshness : but this age
Shall aptly chuse as answering best its own,
A love that clings not, nor is exigent,
Encumbers not the active purposes,
Nor drains their source ; but proffers with free grace
Pleasure at pleasure touched, at pleasure waived,
A washing of the weary traveller's feet,
A quenching of his thirst, a sweet repose
Alternate and preparative, in groves
Where loving much the flower that loves the shade,
And loving much the shade that that flower loves,
He yet is unbewildered, unenslaved,
Thence starting light and pleasantly let go
When serious service calls.

LEOLF.

'Tis all most true.
But of these tidings you misjudge the tenour.
'Tis not of mine, but of your daughter's marriage,
I am to speak.

WULFSTAN.

My daughter, my good Lord !
Must she be married ?

LEOLF.

'Twas her will to be;
And upon Wednesday she gave it way.

WULFSTAN.

Was married upon Wednesday? It is strange!
She was a child but yesterday, and now
A woman and a wife! O' Wednesday—
And unto whom, I pray you, was she married?

LEOLF.

To one whose comeliness in woman's eye
Excels the gifts of fortune that he wants;
To one whose innocence in the eye of Heaven
Excels the excellence of an erring wit:
To Ernway.

WULFSTAN.

You astonish me, my Lord.
It is most strange; indeed 'tis singular!
She never mentioned it to me.

LEOLF.

In that
She missed of what was filially owing
To a kind parent, for which lapse through me
She craves forgiveness.

WULFSTAN.

I have lost my child!

LEOLF.

Nay, nay, my worthy friend.

WULFSTAN.

My Lord, 'tis so.
She is my daughter, but no more my child;
And therein is a loss to parents' hearts
Exceeding great.

Enter an OFFICER.

OFFICER.

My Lord, there 's news from Court;
They seek you at the Castle, whither is come
Oscar, that 's so much trusted of Earl Athulf,
With letters.

LEOLF.

Of what purport, did he say?
Does all go well?

OFFICER.

To take his word, my Lord,
They speak of nothing but prosperity.
My Lord Archbishop, with a loyal will,
Abets the coronation, in whose wake

Comes my Lord Abbot Dunstan, his lean cheek
Surprised with smiles. So smoothly runs the realm,
Missives are sent to each confederate Earl,
To bid his power disband; and these to you
Are of that import.

LEOLF.

Is it so? Oh, Athulf!
Art thou not over-reached? I fear it much.
Dunstan in smiles? A presage to be feared.
I would I were at Kingston with my power.
Conceive you what this smiling may portend?

WULFSTAN.

You read it as the scholiast of mankind
Should ever read their acts, conjunctively,
Interpreting the several by the whole.

LEOLF.

Then, Hederic, we will expedite the levies.
The daylight 's lengthened by yon rounding moon.
Long marches and short nights—and so to Kingston.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

KINGSTON. A CHAMBER LEADING TO THE BANQUETING HALL IN THE PALACE.

The Dish-Thane passes through, followed by other Officers of the Household, by Attendants bearing dishes, and by the Female Cupbearer. In the back of the scene are a motley crowd, consisting of Musicians tuning their instruments two Fortune-Tellers, HEIDA *and* THORBIORGA ; GRIMBALD, *the King's Jester;* BRIDFERTH, *Dunstan's Chaplain; a few Monks and secular Priests, several Thanes of the second rank, Ceorls, and Soldiers. The Persons of the scene are in constant movement, changing their situations or passing in and out, some eagerly, others idly. Once or twice an Earl or Ealderman passes through, but without stopping or mixing with the crowd, which reverently makes way. The parties who are heard to speak are those who pass in front or pause there.*

FIRST SOLDIER.

In the north aisle was I and saw it all.

SECOND SOLDIER.

The bailiff (curse him !) broke my head with his staff,
Or I had got there too.

FIRST SOLDIER.

Most royally
His excellent Majesty demeaned himself,
And graciously and grandly. At the Abbot
Methought he looked askance, but with the rest . . .

(*They pass.*)

FIRST MONK.

—In the south aisle. He faltered as he swore
To keep the Church in peace.

SECOND MONK.

His cheek was pale.

FIRST MONK.

It was as white as leprosy.

BRIDFERTH.

No marvel,
For such an eye was on him in that hour
As smote Gehazi.

(*They pass.*)

A THANE (*who advances in company with a* SCHOLAR)

Hark ye! are we blind?
The Princess was led in by brave Earl Athulf;
And didst thou mark the manner of it, ha?

SCHOLAR.

Methought she leaned upon him and toward him,
With a most graceful timid earnestness;
A leaning more of instinct than of purpose,
And yet not undesigned. But think you then . . .

(*They pass.*)

HEIDA (*sings to a harp*).

She was fresh and she was fair,
Glossy was her golden hair;
Like a blue spot in the sky
Was her clear and loving eye.

He was true and he was bold,
Full of mirth as he could hold;
Through the world he broke his way
With jest, and laugh, and lightsome lay.

Love ye wisely, love ye well;
Challenge then the gates of Hell.
Love and truth can ride it out,
Come bridal song or battle shout.

FIRST PRIEST.

Our gallant Heretoch, the good Earl Leolf,
Should have been there methought.

SECOND PRIEST.

He should have been;

But there are reasons, look ye,—reasons—mum—
Most excellent reasons—softly—in your ear—

(*They pass.*)

THORBIORGA (*sings*).

He stood on the rock,
And he looked on the sea,
And he said of his false Love,
'My Love, where is she?

'Have they bought her with bracelets
And lured her with gold?
Is her love for her lover
A tale that is told?'

From the crest of the wave,
In the deep of the gulf,
Came a voice that cried, 'Save!
For behold the sea-wolf!'

He stood on the rock,
And he looked at the wave,
And he said, 'Oh, St. Ulfrid!
Who's this that cries, Save!'

Then arose from the billow
A head with a crown,
And two hands that divided
The hair falling down.

As the foam in the moonlight
The two hands were fair,
And they put by the tangles
Of seaweed and hair.

He knew the pale forehead—
A spell to his ear
Was the voice that repeated,
'The sea-wolf is here!'

'I come, Love,' he answered—
At sunrise next day
A fisherman wakened
The Priest in the Bay.

"For the soul of a sinner
Let masses be said—
The sin shall be nameless,
And nameless the dead."

Enter the GREAT CHAMBERLAIN *with the Horse-Thane and other Officers of the Household.*

GREAT CHAMBERLAIN.

His Majesty! Make way. His Majesty!
Sound trumpets!

(*A flourish of trumpets.*)

The KING, *wearing his Crown and leading in the* QUEEN MOTHER, *passes across the back-scene, and is followed by* EARL ATHULF *leading in* ETHILDA, *by* ODO *and* DUNSTAN

with SIGERIC *and* BRIDFERTH, *by* HARCATHER, CEOLWULF, ÆTHELRIC, EADBALD, IDA, BRAND, ECFRID, GORF, *and* TOSTY, *all military leaders on the Monastic side; and by* CLARENBALD, EARL SIDROC, *the* BISHOP of ROCHESTER, *and divers great Officers of State and Nobles of the King's party. The Procession, when it passes off, enters the Banqueting Hall.*

FIRST CEORL.

The King stepped proudly.

SECOND CEORL.

But his countenance
Methought was troubled. Is he well in health?

FIRST CEORL.

Now comes the Primate.

SECOND CEORL.

What, can this be he
That looks so fierce and haughty? Once before
I saw him, when a cripple asked for alms;
So lowly of demeanour was his Grace,
I had not known, but for the mitred head,
Which was the beggar, which the Lord Archbishop.

FIRST CEORL.

He 's humble to the poor to spite the rich.
Give me the man that 's humble to his peers.

SECOND CEORL.

There 's Dunstan.

FIRST CEORL.

What, is yonder thing alive ?

GRIMBALD (*the Jester, who has come up behind*).

Sir, he 's above ground.

SECOND CEORL.

So we see, my friend.

GRIMBALD.

For this occasion, sir. A hole i' the earth
Is where he lives, sir, mostly : yea his life
Is of the earth, sir, earthy.

FIRST CEORL.

It was there
That he encountered Sathanas.

GRIMBALD.

'Twas there.
The Devil, sir, one day, grubbing for earth-nuts—
A simple fare you'll say, but for his ends
The Devil, you'll find, can be a very hermit—
Digging and grubbing—what should his old claws clutch
But Father Dunstan's skull ! 'Ho, ho !' cried he,
'A bigger one than ever ;' but thereat . . . .

Oh mercy! here is Gurmo! Sirs, I say,
The feasting and the singing and the dancing
Should carry us to midnight—Cockadoodle!

A song will I sing
Of an excellent king
That carried his crown where a bee has her sting.

Enter from the Banqueting Hall Two USHERS.

FIRST USHER.

The third cup has gone round. You're welcome now
To take your places at the lower board.

GRIMBALD.

In, tag-rag—enter, rabblement—in all!

And to him the Queen said,
'Sure your senses are fled,
Put your boots in that place and your crown on your head.'

In, dregs; in, scum; in, commonalty, in!
In, many fools by nature, one by name!

Exeunt into the Banqueting Hall, all but the USHERS *and the* SCHOLAR.

FIRST USHER.

The Princess and a certain Earl sit close.

SCHOLAR.

Ah! she is peerless! Happy were that man
That should enthrall her though she were a peasant!
What in another might have seemed amiss
In her was but a freshness and new charm
Loosed from the graceful nakedness of Nature.
She ate but half a pigeon, and did you mark
How with her tiny fingers and her teeth
She gnawed and tore the bones, talking 'twixt whiles,
With such a lively and a pretty action,
That appetite itself and all its ways
Seemed mainly spiritual.

SECOND USHER.

Hush! Hark to that!

(*A flourish of trumpets.*)

FIRST USHER.

The ladies leave the board.

SCHOLAR.

I'll see her go.
She ever moves as if she moved to music.
Are ye not wanted? Oh! what 's like to her!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

A CHAMBER IN THE PALACE.

Enter EMMA *and* ERNWAY.

EMMA.

Take this to Sheen. Seek Father Ricola out ;
Tell him the King shall follow in an hour,
And then Elgiva.—Ernway, if thou lov'st me,
Be sudden and be secret.

ERNWAY.

Trust me, Emma,
I will be both.

EMMA.

Here is the private stair
Which brings thee past the ward, and with this key . . .
How dark it is ! Be careful how you step.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

ANOTHER CHAMBER IN THE PALACE.

SIGERIC (*the Archbishop's Secretary*); *and* BRIDFERTH (*Dunstan's Chaplain.*)

SIGERIC.

He 's sure then she hath fallen ?

BRIDFERTH.

He thinks he 's sure.

He says he hath an insight and an art
Which tells it him.

SIGERIC.

My Lord of Canterbury
Is not so well assured ; though still the Abbot
Doth overrule him with his certainties.
But this his Grace desires, that not the less
You watch her every step.

BRIDFERTH.

His Grace is right.
It is the languid, not the lively warmth
That most endangers women. He is right.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.

THE BANQUETING HALL.

Are seated at the board, all the Male Guests who passed through in the Third Scene. But the King's place is vacant. Goblets are passed from hand to hand. GRIMBALD *the Jester stands behind the chair of state.*

HARCATHER.

Comes not the King again?

CEOLWULF.

Surely he will.

TOSTY.

He will! Nay, nay, he must.

DUNSTAN.

Content yourselves;
It cannot be but he will come again.
He cannot mean us such disparagement
As thus, and at this high and solemn feast,
To quit his guests, the noblest of the land,
Without a 'God be with you,' or a word
To sheathe the sharp directness and the sting
Of such a plain offence.

IDA.

'Twere good, my Lords,
We sent our humble duty to the King,
Craving his expedite return.

GREAT CHAMBERLAIN.

Grith, Offa,
Go seek the King; and say his noble guests
Find themselves by his absence overcast
As with a cloud, and pray his swift return.

[*Exeunt* GRITH *and* OFFA.

GRIMBALD.

Betwixt the new ship and the headland old
The dolphins ducked and the waters rolled.
Worse and more of it! the wind went mad—
But the pilot he drank no more than he had.

TOSTY.

Peace, Fool! The very hour that he could spare us....

CEOLWULF.

A singular and unadvised retreat.

TOSTY.

I say if one of us—I say if I....

SIDROC.

Well, well, he 's young.

TOSTY.

I say, my Lords, if I,
Not being sick nor drunk, jump from my seat,
And turn on this illustrious company
My back, that is not comelier, nor more pleasant,
Nor acceptabler than another man's,
Why then, my Lords, let me be who I may,
I say I offer to this company,
Not being drunk, a strange discourtesy,
And quite the obverse of a salutation.

ÆTHELRIC.

Bear this, and we shall....

CLARENBALD.

Tut! he'll come again.
Pass round the goblet. Eadric, take the harp,
And sweeten our carouse with minstrelsy.

[*Music. After which, re-enter* GRITH *and* OFFA.

THE GREAT CHAMBERLAIN.

How now?

OFFA.

My Lords, His Gracious Majesty
Bids us to say that he has calls elsewhere,
And loves not too much quaffing, which is wont

To leave you with less reason than the beasts,
Rolling upon the floor. Wherefore, my Lords,
He prays you with all love and courtesy
To hold His Grace excused, for he is young
And loves not quaffing.

ODO.

Will ye suffer this?
If rated thus for nothing, what 's your fate
When, standing for your liberties, ye check him?
If thus affronted at the festive board,
What in the Witenagemót awaits you?

TOSTY.

He loves not quaffing!

HARCATHER.

Rolling on the floor!

ATHULF.

Sirs, for His Majesty's too hasty message,
I grant it ill-advised; but, sirs, his youth,
If ye will temperately consider....

HARCATHER.

Youth!
Hath youth a privilege to maltreat the old?

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ECFRID.

He loves not quaffing! Ah, my good Lord Athulf,
But what else loves he? There are sins beside.
Say he had left us for a lady's bower—
There is a revelling he impugns not.

DUNSTAN.

Ha!

ECFRID.

What lady she may be, my good Lord Athulf,
Concerns not us.

ODO.

Ho! some of you go forth,
And seek the King, and say to him from me,
That he, or willingly or not, perforce
Must instantly return; and see ye bring him.

ATHULF.

Whoso shall take that errand from this hall,
Let him take that therewith.

(*Throws his glove on the floor. Three or four Earls start up in their seats. In the meantime* GURMO *has entered, and spoken apart to* DUNSTAN.)

DUNSTAN (*rising*).

My Lords, sit still. I'll bring the boy myself.
Here, varlets, sweep this litter from the floor.

(*Spurns the glove with his foot as he passes, and Exit.*)

ATHULF (*his hand on his sword*).

Which of you here, that wears not frock nor hood,
Will this vile Abbot's vilest act avouch?

(*Several Earls of the Monachal party lay their hands on their swords, and spring upon the floor. The company rises in disorder.*)

THE SENESCHAL.

Peace, ho! My Lords, bethink ye where ye are;
He that within the palace draws his sword
Doth forfeit an Earl's were. Peace, peace, be still!
Keep the King's peace!

HARCATHER.

Not I, for one.

TOSTY.

Nor I.

OTHERS.

Nor I; nor I.

THE SENESCHAL.

Then who will keep it not

Let him withdraw, and not pollute with blood
The precincts of the palace.

EADBALD.

Then withdraw.

MANY VOICES.

Withdraw! withdraw!

HARCATHER.

Keep the King's peace? If longer than three minutes
I keep it, may I die in my bed like a cow!

[*Exeunt omnes with tumult and confusion.*

SCENE VII.

AN APARTMENT LEADING TO AN ORATORY IN THE ROYAL RESIDENCE AT SHEEN.

As the Scene opens, EDWIN *and* ELGIVA *are discovered before the Altar in the Oratory, and* RICOLA, *the King's Chaplain, is joining their hands. They all three then advance out of the Oratory to the front.*

RICOLA.

So be ye one from this time forth for ever,
And God for ever be your gracious guide

In love and peace to live! A hasty rite
Hath solemnized your nuptials; not the less
Be ye observant of the sacred bonds
Wherein ye stand contracted for all time.
My sovereign Lord and Lady, ye are young,
And these are times, and yours beyond compare
Stations of trial: Be ye each to each
Helpful, and fullest of comfort, next to God.
And so, my blessing poured in tears upon you,
I bid you well to fare.

EDWIN.

My honoured friend,
We thank you for this service, one of many,
But of the many greatest. For awhile
Our secret kept, the Queen abides with you.
I must return to Kingston; but ere midnight
Once more you 'll see me here. Farewell till then.
Shortly the Queen shall follow you.

[*Exit* RICOLA.

Elgiva!
Oh, past expression beautiful and dear,
And now my own for ever! Let my soul
Be satisfied, for 'tis a joy so great

To know thee mine, that Nature for my bound
Seems insufficient, and my spirit yearns
Intent with thee to pass from this pale earth
Into that rosy and celestial clime
Where life is ever thus.

ELGIVA.

How joy fulfilled
Makes the heart tremble! Now no change can come
That is not to be feared.

Re-enter RICOLA.

RICOLA.

My Lord, my Liege,
Forgive me—but I fear . . . . I'm old, my Lord,
And shake at trifles, but I strangely fear
That mischief is afoot.

EDWIN.

At Kingston?

RICOLA.

There,
And coming hitherward; the poor fool Grimbald
Came flying like the scud o' the storm before,
To warn you.

EDWIN.

And what saith he? Call him in

(RICOLA *goes to the door, and returns with* GRIMBALD.)

EDWIN.

Well, my good fool, and what hast thou to tell?

GRIMBALD.

There was grace after meat with a fist on the board,
And down went the morat, and out flew the sword.

ELGIVA.

Truce to thy calling for a while, good fool,
And tell us plainly what befell.

GRIMBALD.

By the ears
The nobles went together; in the fray
The Horse-Thane and the Dish-Thane were o'erborne
And sent to prison. Then I took to my heels
To bring you word.

ELGIVA.

Earl Athulf? Where is he?

GRIMBALD.

He stood against Harcather hand to hand
When I departed; but I know no more.

Enter the QUEEN-MOTHER.

THE QUEEN-MOTHER.

So you are here, my son! and, Madam, you!
And is it for this you scurry from your place?
Is it for this you quit your noble guests?
Is it for this you vex the kingdom? Yea,
To shedding of blood—for there has blood been shed—
For nought but this? Oh, fie! for dalliance—oh!
And whiles you waste the hours in wantonness . . .

EDWIN.

Good Mother, speak of what you know. Not here
Was either wantonness or waste of time.
You little think how little idly spent
Has been the hour that's gone.

THE QUEEN-MOTHER.

How spent? oh, son!
But here come those can speak. Lo! here they come!

Enter DUNSTAN *and* ODO, *with two or three Thanes following, who are gradually augmented as the scene proceeds, till the stage is filled with* DUNSTAN'S *adherents.*

RICOLA.

Wilt please you to withdraw?

ELGIVA.

I thank you, no.

EDWIN.

Wherefore is this, my Lord Archbishop? Why
Dost thou pursue me to my privacy?
When I did leave you 'twas my will to leave you.
Am I your King, or am I not?

ODO.

Sir, Sir,
'Tis true, with suffrage of the Witena,
You were anointed with the holy oil
And crowned this day by me. But deem not thence
That you are free to spurn us. Rather deem
That calls more urgent, bonds of stricter claim,
Enjoin the duties of your sovereignty;
Amongst which duties eminently first,
Is this, that when your Lords and Councillors,
The pillars of the realm, in conference meet,
You should be with them, wisely there to learn
From the assembled wisdom of the State.

EDWIN.

'Twas for carousal, not for conference,
They met to-day.

DUNSTAN.

Sirs, stand ye all apart,
And suffer that I reason with the King,
Whose youth betrays him. Oh unruly flesh!
Oh wanton blood of youth! The primal sin!
The first offender still! The original snare!
Perdition came of Woman, and alway since,
When Time was big with mischief and mischance,
He felt his forelock in a soft white hand.

ELGIVA.

Of Woman say 'st thou that perdition came?
'Twas of the Serpent, Priest.

THE QUEEN-MOTHER.

What, break'st thou in?
Thou bold and naughty jade! Thou pit! Thou snare!

EDWIN.

Oh, Mother, hold! Know you at whom you rail?
Deem her your daughter, or me not your son.

THE QUEEN-MOTHER.

Thou art not and thou shalt not be my son,
If thou demean'st thyself to her—a witch!
A practiser of sorceries!

EDWIN (*kneeling*).

Oh God!

I pray Thee that Thou shorten not my days,
Ceasing to honour this disnatured flesh
That was my mother!

ELGIVA.

Never was she that:

A mother vacant of a mother's heart
Is in the sight of Nature none.

DUNSTAN.

Thou darest!

And seest thou in what presence? Be thou warned!
Thy witcheries that inflame this carnal King
Far other fires shall kindle in the Church—
The channel as of mercies, so of wrath.
Thou stand'st before its excellent Archbishop,
And me, its humblest minister: men both
Dead to the flesh and loathing from their souls
To company with women. To us thy charms
Are flat and futile, as thy sins are sharp,
And spur us to that vengeance God inflicts
Through us on scorners.

EDWIN.

Heed them not, Elgiva.

ELGIVA.

Content thee! never were they heeded less
By God or by his Angels than by me.

EDWIN.

Insolent Churchmen! *You* renounce the World!
All in it that is loving, or can be loved,
You'll teach yourselves and others to renounce,
Because cold vanities with meagre heats
Alternate, have consumed you to the core,
And given your hearts the dry-rot. Meddlesome Monks!
The love it is not in you, or to feel
For women, or from womankind to win,
You ostentatiously deny yourselves
As atrophy denies itself to fatten.

ELGIVA.

What worth are you to us, that set no store
By you or by your threats? I tell thee, Priest,
I do make no account of thee.

DUNSTAN.

Fly hence,
Pale Prostitute! Avaunt, rebellious Fiend,
Which speakest through her!

ELGIVA.

And I tell thee more,
I am thy Sovereign Mistress and thy Queen.

EDWIN.

My lawful wedded wife.

THE QUEEN-MOTHER.

Ah, woe is me!

ODO.

Thy lawful wife! How lawful? By what law?
Incest and fornication!

DUNSTAN.

Who art thou?
I see thee, and I know thee—yea, I smell thee!
Again 'tis Satan meets me front to front,
Again I triumph! Where, and by what rite,
And by what miscreant Minister of God
And rotten member, was this mockery,
That was no marriage, made to seem a marriage?

RICOLA.

Lord Abbot, by no . . . . .

DUNSTAN.

What then, was it thou?
The Church doth cut thee off and pluck thee out!
A Synod shall be summoned! Chains for both!

Chains for that harlot, and for this dog-priest!
Oh wall of Jezreel!

EDWIN.

Villains, stand ye back!
Stand from the Queen .... Oh, had I but a sword!
What—felons! Ye shall hang for this ere long.
Loose me or I will ....

ODO.

Sir, be calm, and know
'Tis for your own behoof and for your Crown's.

ELGIVA.

Be of good comfort, Edwin; we shall meet
Where none can part us. Are ye men? Hold off!
I will not put you to that shame to force me.

[*She is taken out.*

ODO.

Thou Queen! Go, get thee gone! A crown for thee!
No, nor a head to put it on to-morrow.

THE QUEEN-MOTHER.

Alack! the law is sharp. But Gurmo, run,
See she have Christian burial; speed thee, Gurmo.

DUNSTAN.

Madam, your pardon. Gurmo, wait on me.

EDWIN.

Elgiva, oh Elgiva! Oh, my wife!
I'll find thee friends, though now .... On, traitors! slaves!

When I have raised my force, I'll bring you bound
With halters round your necks, to lick the dust
Before her footstool. I will have you scourged
By hangmen's hands in every market town—
Yes, you, my Lords!——O woman, get thee hence!
I cast thee from me, and I curse the fate
That made thy hateful womb my habitation
Ere my blind soul could chuse. Perfidious Monk!
Smilest thou! Villain! But I will raise a force . . .

[*Exit.*

DUNSTAN.

Lord Primate, thou hast crowned a baby's brow.
May it please you follow, lest he come to harm.

[*Exit* ODO.

Friends, quit not my Lord Primate. Follow all.

[*Exeunt all but* HARCATHER, *who stays behind on a sign from* DUNSTAN.

Harcather, haste; convey Elgiva hence
With speed to Chester, and in strictest ward
Confine her there; but keep her life untouched.

[*Exit* HARCATHER.

So shall we brandish o'er the enamoured King
A trenchant terror.—See we next what friends
Will stead us in the Synod.—Break, thou storm!
My soul is ready. Try thy strength against me.

[*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

THE CASTLE AT TONBRIDGE.

LEOLF'S *Army encamped around it.* OSCAR *and* LEOLF'S SENESCHAL.

OSCAR.

I would that Wulfstan might have staid behind;
He hath the Heretoch's ear, and though he's wise
His wisdom is not for the camp; we march
As with a drag-chain.

SENESCHAL.

Nay, good Oscar, nay;
We can't go further yet. The force in front
Hourly increases; our reserves are late;
And nothing comes from Wessex.

Enter WULFSTAN THE WISE.

Worthy Sir,
Your daughter, as I hear, is married. Well;
It is a blessing if her choice be yours,

And if it be not, still the father's heart
Will give the child God-speed.

WULFSTAN.

Assuredly.
I did but bid her be less mutable,
Telling her that the past, or worse or better,
If driven in her and experienced home,
Might be as piles whereon to build the future
Else insecure. I bid her be resolved,
Her choice now planted, forth of it to bring
The fruits of constancy; for constancy
On all things works for good; the barren breeds,
The fluent stops, the fugitive is fixed
By constancy. I told you, did I not,
The story of the wind, how he himself,
The desultory wind, was wrought upon?

OSCAR.

Yes, Sir; you told it twice.

[*Exit* SENESCHAL.

WULFSTAN.

The tale was this:
The wind, when first he rose and went abroad
Through the waste region, felt himself at fault,

Wanting a voice; and suddenly to earth
Descended with a wafture and a swoop,
Where, wandering volatile from kind to kind,
He wooed the several trees to give him one.
First he besought the ash; the voice she lent
Fitfully with a free and lashing change
Flung here and there its sad uncertainties:
The aspen next; a fluttered frivolous twitter
Was her sole tribute: from the willow came,
So long as dainty summer dressed her out,
A whispering sweetness, but her winter note
Was hissing, dry, and reedy: lastly the pine
Did he solicit, and from her he drew
A voice so constant, soft, and lowly deep,
That there he rested, welcoming in her
A mild memorial of the ocean-cave
Where he was born.

Enter LEOLF, *with* EMMA, ERNWAY, *and* GRIMBALD.

LEOLF.

Unhappy news! last night!
Sorely I grieve—ay, bitterly repent—
Had I been in my place—oh, weak recoil—
But it avails not.—Yesterday, my friends,

Was fruitful in events. The King was crowned,
Was married, was o'ermastered by the Monks.
The Queen the while to Chester carried captive ;
Earl Athulf to the Tower.

OSCAR.

In one short day
All this befell ?

WULFSTAN.

Oh, woe-bewildered day!

GRIMBALD.

A shout—a hubbub in the camp—our ears
Are but fools' ears, and yet they hear a shout.

LEOLF.

A welcome to some friend. As each arrives
They hail him thus, and as the force he brings
Is more or less, so measure they the cry.
This is the loudest I have heard. Look out.

ERNWAY.

I see no force, my Lord, and but one man,
Who hurries hitherward, and as he comes
They crowd him, and with clapping of their hands
And shouting bring him on. See !

ATHULF *enters hastily.*

ATHULF.

Oh my friend . . . . .

Leolf . . . . Alas ! . . . . What, Grimbald with you ! . . Nay,
You know it then already. Think no worse
Of us or of our fortunes than they are.
This half-faced treason will not touch the life.
Ill-starred ambition ! Oh my luckless sister !
But think her not endangered.

LEOLF.

And yourself ?
How come you hither ? Were you not in ward ?

ATHULF.

The Princess with a signet of the King's,
Gold of her own, and promises and tears,
Wrought on my guards. They follow me. Oh ! Leolf !
You are avenged. My sister, oh my sister !
She is not and she could not be forgiven !
God's justice . . . . .

LEOLF.

Athulf, say no more but this ;
She stands within the keeping of God's love.

For earthly aid, 'twill reach her with such speed
As earthly love can minister. The light troops
Shall march with me to Cheshire, leaving you
With the main body of my force and those
That soon will join you, to relieve the King.
So shall I check the rising in the West,
Which we must look for else, and so provide
Against extremities and accidents
That else might hurt the Queen. They muster now
And wait me on the ramparts.

ATHULF.

I am with you.

[*Exeunt* LEOLF *and* ATHULF.

OSCAR.

These are sad tidings.

EMMA.

With a frightful force
They tear Earl Athulf, for his hopes were high
And he was crowding canvas. To his friend,
Whom in a foggy grief they found becalmed,
They come but as a vivifying gust
To quicken what was dead: from this time forth
A cry is in his heart, a trumpet-call

That sounds a summons to the rescue : see
If he obey it not.

OSCAR.

A settled gloom
Was in his face before.

EMMA.

A seated pain
Preyed on him inwards.

GRIMBALD.

Holla ! Holla ! Ho !
The camp is all in motion. Look ! Behold !
The banners fly i' the wind.

EMMA.

A token this
That we are soon to march. Get we afoot.

[*Exeunt* EMMA, OSCAR, *and* GRIMBALD.

WULFSTAN.

A lobster, should his limb have eating sores,
Or his articulate coat of mail be pierced,
Snaps the offending member at the joint
And casts it off—such surgery is his ;
And as by instinct he, so we by art
Of amputation, easily discard
The outward seats of pain—

EMMA (*from behind the scene*).

Come, Father, come.

WULFSTAN.

The outward seats of pain—I will, my Child.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

A CHAMBER IN THE TOWER OF LONDON.

DUNSTAN. (*Alone.*)

Kings shall bow down before thee, said my soul,
And it is even so. Hail, ancient Hold!
Thy chambers are most cheerful, though the light
Enter not freely; for the eye of God
Smiles in upon them. Cherished by His smile
My heart is glad within me, and to Him
Shall testify in works a strenuous joy.
—Methinks that I could be myself that rock
Whereon the Church is founded,—wind and flood
Beating against me, boisterous in vain.
I thank you, Gracious Powers! Supernal Host!
I thank you that on me, though young in years,

Ye put the glorious charge to try with fire,
To winnow and to purge. I hear your call!
A radiance and a resonance from Heaven
Surrounds me, and my soul is breaking forth
In strength, as did the new-created Sun
When Earth beheld it first on the fourth day.
God spake not then more plainly to that orb
Than to my spirit now. I hear the call.
My answer, God, and Earth, and Hell shall hear.
But I could reason with thee, Gracious Power,
For that thou givest me to perform thy work
Such sorry instruments. The Primate shakes,
Gunnilda totters.—Gurmo! And of those
That stand for me more absolutely, most
Are slaves through fear, not saints by faith! 'Tis well!
The work shall be the more my own.

Enter GURMO.

What now?

GURMO.

You called.

DUNSTAN.

I think I did. Send me those Bishops.

[*Exit* GURMO.

—More eminently my own. The Church is great,
Is holy, is ineffably divine!
Spiritually seen, and with the eye of faith,
The body of the Church, lit from within,
Seems but the luminous phantom of a body;
The incorporeal spirit is all in all.
Eternity *a parte post et ante*
So drinks the refuse, thins the material fibre,
That lost in ultimate tenuity
The actual and the mortal lineaments,
The Church in Time, the meagre, definite, bare,
Ecclesiastical anatomy,
The body of this death, translates itself,
And glory upon glory swallowing all
Makes earth a scarce distinguishable speck
In universal heaven. Such is the Church
As seen by faith; but otherwise regarded,
The body of the Church is searched in vain
To find the seat of the soul; for it is nowhere.
Here are two Bishops, but 'tis not in them.

Enter OSWALD, *Bishop of Worcester, and* ETHELWALD, *Bishop of Winchester.*

Save you, my Lords! Are there no seats? A stool—
Fetch me a stool.

(*A stool is brought, on which* DUNSTAN *seats himself. The Bishops continue standing.*)

What business brings you here?

OSWALD.

Lord Abbot, we have served thee faithfully,
And still obeyed thy voice through many a change.
We would that others, who have done no less
In outward show, were inwardly as true.

DUNSTAN.

Who fails?

ETHELWALD.

We do not say distinctly who,
Nor positively point by point wherein;
But this we say, that we whose hearts are known
From yours inseparable, are received no longer,
By some amongst our brethren, as we were.
We hear that Bishops meet by tens and twelves,
Unknown to us; we think unknown to you.
We therefore deemed it parcel of our duty
To give you warning.

DUNSTAN.

Is there more?

OSWALD.

To-day

There spreads a rumour that Prince Edgar's force,
Met on the Avon by the Heretoch,
Was beaten back and scattered. Joining this
To what is surer, that Earl Athulf's power
Creeps close upon us,—sundry citizens
That are of credit with the baser sort
About the suburbs, stir them up to riot.

DUNSTAN.

Doth nothing happen to such men? 'Tis strange;
Good men, for whom the Church puts up her prayers,
Are daily taken off.

ETHELWALD.

'Tis said, moreover,
The Synod when it meets will not be pure,
Nor of one mind.

DUNSTAN.

'Tis ignorantly said:
I am the Synod's mind. Sirs, you did well
To bring me what had reached you. Leave me now.

Come back at night. The interval use well;
And what you gather give me then to know.

[*Exeunt* BISHOPS.

This faction runs a-head. What mean they, then?
Why verily to abuse, and by their wiles
Betray the Synod. Nothing less. But God,
Who to the Devil incarnate in the Snake
Gave subtlety, denies not to his Saints
(So they shall use it to his glory and gain)
The weapon he permitted to the Fiend.
Erratic Spirit, here thou art, wild worm,
Piercing the earth with subterraneous toil,
And there with wings scouring the darkened sky!
Still do I meet thee; still, wherever met,
I foil thee; sometimes as with Michael's sword,
Sometimes as with thine own. What, Gurmo, ho!

Enter GURMO.

In the synodial chamber, on the wall,
There hangs a cross, in size and shape the same
As that which Simon bare to Golgotha.
I fashioned it myself of cedar brought
From Palestine. Within the hollow bole
A man could stand upright; and at the back

I placed a pannel with a secret spring,
Which touched, it starts aside. Thou knowest, Gurmo,
That Satan is mechanical, and God
Must needs have mechanists at work to cross
The works of Satan. God has now in hand
Matters in which my workmanship must aid,
Thy duties minister. Go to that cross,
And, prostrate thrown, repent thee of thy life.
Soon will I follow, and instruct thee there
How by thy service thou mayst purge thy sin.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

PALACE OF THE ARCHBISHOP IN LONDON.

ODO, *with* LEOFWYN, *Bishop of Lincoln, and* FRIDSTAN, *Bishop of Lichfield.*

ODO.

It stands not with our honour either way
To be so overridden.

FRIDSTAN.

One sole man,

Though he were Saint uprisen, no charter hath
To lead by the nose the Fathers of the Church,
The Archbishop and the Bishops. Zeal is good;
But zeal is one thing when it fasts and prays,
And when it ramps and rages 'tis another.

LEOFWYN.

When he refused the Bishopric from Edred
My mind misgave me. Oh, I said, this man
Is humble upside-down. He that rejects,
With publication and profession loud
Of lowliness, an orderly advancement,
Looks, be assured, what 's orderly to pass,
And leave degrees behind.

FRIDSTAN.

Yea, brother, yea;
He that denies himself to be a Bishop
Looks further than is fitting. He means not well.
He thinks to say to us, Go here, go there!
Me, Dunstan, standing sole, the gaping world
Shall gaze at, bidding Bishops stand aside!
This is not right.

LEOFWYN.

No, nor canonical.

ODO.

Brethren, when I unfolded all the doubts
That compassed round the cause, the enemy's strength,
The fears, the double faces, the false hearts,
That walk amongst us,—reasons all that plead
For caution and some temperate composition,—
He checked and chid me like a troublesome child
That prates at random; bade me know that God
Revealed it otherwise, and he must needs
Believe in God; then calling for a scourge,
Said 'twas a time for exercise devout
And he entreated my good company
For mutual castigation.

Enter SIGERIC.

SIGERIC.

Honoured Lords,
The wench which had an audience upon Wednesday
Is now returned, and with her an old man.

ODO.

Admit the wench.

[*Exit* SIGERIC.

Now we shall find how far
Earl Athulf will be compromised. Come in.

Re-enter SIGERIC, *followed by* EMMA *and* WULFSTAN THE WISE.

Good wench we have expected thee, and thou
Art welcome—but who 's this ?

EMMA.

A man, my Lords,
Known to you all by fame though not by favour ;
Wulfstan the Wise.

ODO.

Sir, you are welcome too.
Earl Athulf peradventure deems the knot
Of these affairs worthy your vindication,
Wherein by message he hath dealt till now
Conveyed us through this envoy, weak by sex,
But verily quick-witted. Sir, we know
Your great renown for wisdom, and we hail
Your advent hither, for we deem the Earl,
In calling age and wisdom to his aid,
Is wise though young, and if he be, the terms
We offer are what wisdom will commend
And modesty embrace.

WULFSTAN.

My good Lords, far
Beyond my merits doth my fame extend ;
But moderation alway have I praised
And peace ensued, and therefore have been held
To mediate not unfit, when Mars attired
In triple steel on this side shakes his spear,
Bellona upon that side mounts her car
By Flight and Terror drawn.

ODO.

You doubtless know
The tenour of our terms,—all Regulars
Since Edred's death supplanted to return,
Save those who did themselves in Edred's reign
Supplant in benefices duly holden
The Secular Incumbents—the new Queen
To be acknowledged so soon as the Pope
Shall grant his dispensation. Even you,
Though secular yourself, must see in this
The scales of Justice balanced. To these terms
What saith the brave Earl Athulf ?

EMMA.

Me, my Lords,

Earl Athulf charged with what from him proceeds ;
What from my father (for he is my father)
You hear, be pleased to value at its worth
As his, but not the Earl's.

LEOFWYN.

The Earl is wise.
The starling shall be true to what she 's taught,
Whilst birds of divination—well—the matter—
How is the Earl inclined to us ?

EMMA.

My Lords,
The Earl inclines ; but ere he shall impledge
Himself, much less his absent friend Earl Leolf,
In this behalf, he looks to be assured
The Synod late convened for other ends
Will set its seal to this.

ODO.

The Earl demands
No more than what is just and right. To-morrow
The Synod meets, and if our voice prevail
Will ratify the terms. But Dunstan still
His purpose holds, and it is rumoured now

Hath secret intercourse with Rome, for ends
Unknown to us.

LEOFWYN.

Earl Athulf is apprised
How that from us the motion may not issue ;
But let it be propounded on his part,
Or by the Seculars before the Synod,
And we shall so foreshape the minds of men,
That by the acclaim of most, if not of all,
It shall be hailed acceptable.

EMMA.

My Lords,
The Earl forgot not this, and therefore sends
With me my father, that persuasively
He may, according to his gifts, impart
The proffered compact, with the instances
That recommend it to the assembled Church ;
Trusting to you to second and support
What he delivers.

ODO.

Sir, be not afraid,
But speak it roundly.

EMMA.

Oh, my Lords, for that,
The spirit within him, when it works to speech,
Fears neither saint nor devil.

LEOFWYN.

That is well.
Yet touch not Dunstan with too rough a hand,
But rather against us be seen to bear.

WULFSTAN.

My Lord Archbishop and Lords Suffragans,
I have considered of my speech, and first
The order of the topics have set down
With notes and comments, if it please you, thus:
Exordium with a forecast of the close:
A forecast of the close; for mark, my Lords,
An argument or abstract setting forth
In the beginning of my discourse the end,
With index to the bearings and the junctures,
Shall quicken you to apprehend my drift
And by a foreknown relevancy clench
The links and consequents, that so my speech
May, like the serpent with his tail in his mouth,

Rejoin itself, whilst in its perfect round
Its lithe articulation stands approved.

LEOFWYN.

We doubt not of your skill, but what in chief
Concerns us, is the matter and the purport.

WULFSTAN.

The dangers of division to the realm
I feelingly expose: Next I commend
The golden mean,—that wisdom's triumph true
Which seeks no conquest save by wisdom's ways
And scorns to trust to fortune or to force.
Earl Athulf's dispositions shall I then
Duly develop; him shall I disclose
As one whose courage high and humour gay
Cover a vein of caution, his true heart,
Intrepid though it be, not blind to danger,
But through imagination's optic glass
Discerning, yea and magnifying it may be,
What still he dares. Him in these colours dressed
I shall set forth as prompt for enterprise
By reason of his boldness, and yet apt
For composition, owing to that vein
Of fancy which enhances, prudence which wards

Contingencies of peril. Then from a scroll
Subscribed by him I read the proffered terms,
And in my oratorical conclusion
Draw my speech round to dangers of the realm
Seen in divisions, and the joys of peace.

ODO.

'Tis dexterously devised, and with our aid
Shall win the general suffrage of the Synod.
For certain of your friends the Seculars,
By secret incitation heartened up,
Will give their voices. Till the Synod meets,
Beseech you be not seen abroad. Farewell!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

A FORTIFIED CAUSEWAY LEADING TO A CHAPEL NEAR THE TOWER OF LONDON.

HEIDA *is discovered leaning with her harp against a parapet in the back-ground. The bell for Vespers is ringing, and parties pass towards the Chapel. Enter in front a patrol of* TWO SOLDIERS.

FIRST SOLDIER.

A minstrel, is she ?

SECOND SOLDIER.

By her garb, I think,

A fortune-teller.

FIRST SOLDIER.

I have seen the day

When such would travel with a princely train,

Welcome to clerk and layman, thane and churl ;

But when the Monks came uppermost they fell.

SECOND SOLDIER.

Filth of the wicked ! dotage of the Gentiles !

Is all they get from them. But Heida still

And Thorbiorga, though their state is fallen,

Hold up their heads. I know not but that yon
Is Heida's self. Pass on this side, I pray.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter ETHILDA *with Attendants who pass on.*

ETHILDA.

Forward, my maidens ; I will follow you.—
The sunset with a warm and ruddy light
Colours the coldness of these gloomy walls
And glances in the casements ; for the day
Makes a good end. Earl Athulf's emissary
By this time should be here. I think she comes.

Enter EMMA.

Maiden, I thank you for your diligence.
Have you the gold? How light a foot is yours!
But is it the Earl's custom to be served
By women in such things?

EMMA.

Madam, of me
He had assurance from the Heretoch,
Who knows me from my cradle, and avouched
That I was gifted with a woman's wit,
And ready with my tongue ; and for my heart

He said it had its own fidelity,
And true to him would be if not to truth.

ETHILDA.

You serve the Heretoch and not Earl Athulf.

EMMA.

Earl Athulf at the Heretoch's behest ;
And they are so entwined that serving one
Is serving both.

ETHILDA.

No, no, you serve not both ;
You serve Earl Leolf only.

EMMA.

If it please you.
Here is the gold ; with this he said your way
Would soon be opened to the King, whose heart
Would then be comforted and fortified
With tidings of deliverance near at hand.

ETHILDA.

That shall be well; but yet my brother's heart
Is carefuller for the Queen's deliverance.
I would that I had comfort for him there.

EMMA.

I trust that both Earl Leolf and the Queen

Will soon be heard of. Heida, could we find her,
Might tell us much; for, either by her art
Or by forerunning of intelligence,
What happens to the Heretoch is hers
So soon as it befalls if not before.
But I have sought her fruitlessly. What 's here?
I think I see her now.

ETHILDA.

If this be she,
Her errand is to us.

EMMA.

Regard her not,
For she is freest of her utterance
When least importuned or observed. Talk on.

ETHILDA.

I think I asked you—yes—how looked the Earl
When last you saw him?

EMMA.

Wasted much. His hair,
Which was not till this year so much as grizzled,
Is almost grey.

ETHILDA.

Earl Athulf grey?

EMMA.

No, no,

Earl Leolf, Madam.

ETHILDA.

Oh! your pardon. Well,

How looked Earl Athulf?

HEIDA, *who has been advancing, and touching her harp fitfully, now plays a low prelude.*

EMMA.

Madam, I may say

Like yonder archway, one half in the shade,

The other in the sun; for hope shines through him.

HEIDA (*sings*).

By sun and moon,
By fire and flood,
By well and stone,
And ashen wood,
By lot and torch,
By dreams and thunder,
Comes that above
That would be under.

EMMA.

She will draw nearer, if you mark her not;

She 's cunning and holds off from questioning,

But she will drop you what she has to tell.

HEIDA (*sings again*).

By Wellesbourne and Charlcote ford,
At break of day, I saw a sword.
Wessex warriors, rank by rank,
Rose on Avon's hither bank;
Mercia's men, in fair array,
Looked at them from Marraway;
Close and closer ranged they soon,
And the battle joined at noon.

By Wellesbourne and Charlcote Lea,
I heard a sound as of the sea;
Thirty thousand rushing men,
Twenty thousand met by ten;
Rang the shield and brake the shaft,
Tosty yelled, Harcather laughed;
Thorough Avon's waters red
Chased by ten the twenty fled.

By Charlcote ford and Wellesbourne,
I saw the Moon's pale face forlorn.
River flowed and rushes sighed,
Wounded warriors groaned and died.
Ella took his early rest,
The raven stood on his white breast;
Hoarsely in the dead man's ear
Raven whispered 'Friend, good cheer!
Ere the winter pinch the crow,
He that slew thee shall lie low.'

ETHILDA.

She cannot tell us of a victory past
But she must dash the triumph of our joy
With bodings of the future. Be it so.
'Twixt telling and foretelling, one is sure,
The other not.

EMMA.

Hush! she can hear you, Madam.

HEIDA.

Princess.

ETHILDA.

Well, Heida, hast thou aught to say?

HEIDA.

Princess, I may not tarry. To the King
Earl Leolf sends his duty, and therewith
This writing. Fare you well.

[*Exit.*

ETHILDA.

Good Heida, stay!
She's gone; but this shall tell us. You can read.

EMMA *reads.*

"*Your Majesty shall know that a battle has been fought and won. Ella the younger led Prince Edgar's power, which ran and left him on the field. I have entered into Staffordshire. Further forward I*

cannot, and back I will not. The Queen (whom God preserve!) is in life, but in durance: wherein she will remain, till your Majesty or Earl Athulf can help me. For her safety, I am assured thereof at present, holding in pawn the lives of three revolted Earls, which have fallen into my hands. For her deliverance, should I attempt it of myself, I should but put her to more hazard. Meantime fear not that aught can approach you from the West.

Yours in all duty and fealty,

LEOLF."

ETHILDA.

This, if I could but to the King convey it,
Would much sustain his spirit.

EMMA.

Please you, Madam,
To use the gold I brought you—it is done.

[*Trumpets sound at a distance.*

ETHILDA.

Hark! the patrol comes round; pass to the chapel.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

A CHAMBER IN THE ARCHBISHOP'S PALACE.

WULFSTAN THE WISE *and* SIGERIC, *the Archbishop's Secretary.*

SIGERIC.

With both these puissant Earls, as I hear say,
You have been inward.

WULFSTAN.

Yea, Sir, in my time;
With Athulf formerly, with Leolf always.

SIGERIC.

Earl Athulf is a merry man accounted.

WULFSTAN.

Much mirth he hath, and yet less mirth than fancy.
His is that nature of humanity
Which both ways doth redound, rejoicing now
With soarings of the soul, anon brought low:
For such the law that rules the larger spirits.
This soul of man, this elemental crasis,
Completed, should present the universe
Abounding in all kinds; and unto all

One law is common,—that their act and reach
Stretched to the farthest is resilient ever,
And in resilience hath its plenary force.
Against the gust remitting fiercelier burns
The fire, than with the gust it burnt before.
The richest mirth, the richest sadness too,
Stands from a groundwork of its opposite;
For these extremes upon the way to meet
Take a wide sweep of Nature, gathering in
Harvests of sundry seasons.

SIGERIC.

These two Earls
Are, certes, the prime spirits of the age.
Yet hardly may we either Earl esteem
A match for Dunstan. From his youth devote
To books, with chemic and mechanic art
Searching the core of things; and then caught up
To Edred's court and favour, studying there
The ways of men and policies of states,
No marvel from such training that he took
An applicable mind; and were he not
Pushed sometimes past the confine of his reason
He would o'ertop the world.

WULFSTAN.

Sir, could he sway
His proper passions, he were Lord of all.
But he is more their captive than the King,
Poor innocent! is his.

SIGERIC.

When others storm
Then only is he calm. 'Twas thought at first
That when the King stood out against the terms,
And would not sign, his life would be the forfeit.
But Dunstan went more craftily to work.
A wasting diet, with perpetual fear,
And solitude, he made his ministers,
Himself desisting.

WULFSTAN.

His, Sir, you shall find
A spirit subdolous, though full of fire.
A spider may he best be likened to,
Which creature is an adept not alone
In workmanship of nice geometry,
But is besides a wary politician:
He, when his prey is taken in the toils,
Withholds himself until its strength be spent

With struggles, and its spirit with despair;
Then with a patient and profound delight
Forth from his ambush stalks.

SIGERIC.

But Dunstan's web
Is woven with a difference. He shrinks
'Tis said from taking life, unless inflamed
By anger, or by exigency pressed.
This softness hath he still.

Enter EMMA.

EMMA.

Why halt you here?
The doors are opened to the ante-chamber,
And it will soon be crowded. Pray you, come.
Earl Sidroc, in an Acolyte's apparel,
Will bear your train, and waits you here without.

SIGERIC.

You have the Archbishop's pass?

WULFSTAN.

Yes, it is here.

EMMA.

I can pass too; I have cajoled with smiles
The High Gerefa's man that keeps the door.

How tardy old friends are, how prompt are new!
Taken in the flower and freshness of good-will,
My friend of yesterday will run his ears
Into some risk to please me. On my back
He'll put a surplice, and amongst the choir
I sing the psalm. But linger not, I pray.

SIGERIC.

The passage to the left—I think you know it.
Come, I will show you.

EMMA.

I beseech you, Sir,
When you address the Synod, wander not;
Be mindful of the purpose.

WULFSTAN.

Yes, my child;
I'll sit the purpose close. Truly, a light
That shines not in its place is worse than none;
And when the thought is prized above the purpose,
'Tis Jack o' the Lanthorn speaks. Oh, Sir, your pardon!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.

A CHAMBER IN THE TOWER.

DUNSTAN, *to whom enter* OSWALD, *Bishop of Worcester, and* ETHELWALD, *Bishop of Winchester.*

DUNSTAN.

They come, and hastily! My Lords, what cheer?
Or, let me say, what tiding? For our cheer,
If God be gracious to us, flies not round
With every gust.

OSWALD.

The Synod is assembling
With Seculars commixed. We hear that still
Earl Athulf hangs at Tonbridge; but his force
Daily increaseth. It is good we go.
This hour we meet the Synod in good heart,
What cometh with the next we know not.

DUNSTAN.

Nay,
Who trusteth knoweth. To the Synod then;
But let us be expected for a season
Before we show ourselves.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII.

A WIDE GALLERY LEADING TO THE SYNODIAL CHAMBER.

It is filled with Monks, Guards, and Attendants. Two of the Gerefa's or High Sheriff's Deputies are in front. Ecclesiastics of rank, including two or three Abbesses, pass through more and more frequently as the Scene proceeds, not unmixed with Civil and Military Functionaries. Each Ecclesiastic is attended by an Acolyte as a train-bearer.

FIRST DEPUTY.

Here they come. What! a Secular! Well, he must pass, though he shall not be welcome.

SECOND DEPUTY.

There are more than he.

FIRST DEPUTY.

They are stricken deer; I would not come amongst the herd if I were they.

SECOND DEPUTY.

I never saw Dunstan's chair before. 'Tis a choice piece of workmanship.

FIRST DEPUTY.

He made it himself, and they say if another were to sit in it, it would toss him in the air. He can make anything, and make it do his bidding.

SECOND DEPUTY.

But should his chair be set above the Archbishop's ?

FIRST DEPUTY.

It was so ordered, and indeed he that is above the King may be above the Archbishop. King, said I! Who knows whether there be a King, or in which brother's reign we that are living live ?

SECOND DEPUTY.

Hush! Speak not so.

FIRST DEPUTY.

Nay, 'tis the way of the beehive, and Courts are no better. Make way, Sirs, if it please you. No offence. Sirs, 'tis my office.. Farther back, I pray.

SECOND DEPUTY.

Here's Godredud.

FIRST DEPUTY.

I say ye shall make room.
What though he be a Secular ? he's noble
And of a generous life.

A MONK.

Six meals a day,
With morat and spiced ale, is generous living.
Also the gout he hath is generous.

ANOTHER MONK.

Bed, board, nor bath, he never yet forewent
The joys of for a day. Look at his tonsure;
A well grown acorn's cup would cover it.

Enter amongst others, WULFSTAN THE WISE, *habited as an Ecclesiastic, attended by* SIDROC, *in the dress of an Acolyte, bearing his train.*

SIDROC (*aside to* WULFSTAN).

Let us stand here, and reckon as they pass
The numbers on each side.

Enter EMMA *in a surplice with a band of Choristers.*

EMMA (*aside to the* FIRST DEPUTY).

Aha! my friend,
Know'st thou the merry wench?

FIRST DEPUTY.

Nay, softly; hush!
But pass no further yet; here you shall stand,
And I will tell you, as they come, who's who.

The first of men! the angels of the church!
I know them all, and most of them...Room, ho!
The Abbot of St. Winifred's—Room, room!
And most of them I call my friends.

SIDROC (*aside to* WULFSTAN.)

The newt
Lived much amongst the tadpoles, and averred
He was acquainted with all kinds of fish.

FIRST DEPUTY.

Here is the Abbot Morcar with one hand.
A woman kissed the other, for which cause
He chopped it off. He emulates St. Arnulph,
And wears a shirt of hedgehog skins. No need
To clear the way for him.

EMMA.

Sirs, push me not.
No, they fall back unbidden.

FIRST DEPUTY.

And here is Monn,
The Abbot of St. Clive's, that heals the sick
And makes the dumb to speak. From far and near
Thousands and thousands make resort to him,
And them that may not for infirmity

He goes to ; or if so be he cannot go,
He sends his walking-stick, which does as well.

EMMA.

See how they press around him.

FIRST DEPUTY.

Room, I say,
Place for the Abbot of St. Clive's !—Lo, there
Cumba, the Priest of Sherborne ; more than twice
Hath he changed sides ; but he 's so mild and sweet,
That there are ever some to hold him up.
Betwixt the Monks and Secular Church, half-way
Stands Cumba, smiling upon both.

SIDROC *(aside)*.

A chicken
Is good for breakfast ; and an egg is good ;
But something half-way 'twixt an egg and chicken
Is vilely bad.

FIRST DEPUTY.

And, to say truth of him,
His faith is mounted on his charity
And sits it easy.

SIDROC (*aside*).

Cumba is my gauge,

And by the crown of his head I know the times.
Grow they ascetic, then his tonsure widens;
Or free, it narrows in.

EMMA.

What man is this,
(*pointing to* WULFSTAN)
With large round silvery head and fair round face,
And those lost eyes so lustrous that see nothing?
Tell me what man is he.

FIRST DEPUTY.

Some country priest;
A man one sees and makes no mention of.
He had his pass or I had questioned him;
For with my will a priest so meanly clad
And slovenly, should take his rags elsewhere.

SIDROC *(aside)*.

Dogs take distinctions, learning from mankind
A worldly lesson; and the beggar 's stayed
When lace and gawds go free.—What say you, Sir?

FIRST DEPUTY.

To you, Sir? nothing.

A cry without of "Place for the Archbishop." *A flourish of trumpets, and enter divers officers of the Archbishop's*

household in procession. Then the Archbishop, attired in splendid vestments, and preceded by SIGERIC, *and* BRIDFERTH, *bearing his mass-book and crucifex. He is supported on the right by the Bishop of Lincoln, on the left by the Bishop of Lichfield, and followed by a long train of Officers and attendants.*

ODO (*returning the obeisances with which he is received as he passes through.*)

The blessing of God's peace, my Sons, be on you;
And I beseech you, pray that by God's grace
Our counsels may be prospered to His glory.

[*Exit with his train.*

FIRST MONK.

The Primate is too ancient for the times;
He is too sudden when he 's choleric,
Too slow when he 's at ease.

SECOND MONK.

He is shaken both ways.

A THANE.

The Primate looks an inch or two less tall
Than he was wont, methinks; nor is his step
So firm as once it was.

AN ACOLYTE.

Time, Sir, and care.

SIDROC *(aside)*.

Or peradventure Sin and Fear.—Good Father,
Saw you my Lord the Archbishop pass?

WULFSTAN.

My Son?

SIDROC.

Saw you my Lord the Primate?

WULFSTAN.

Yes, my Son.
Was it not he that passed in gold and purple?

SIDROC.

The same. We wait but for the Abbot now.

WULFSTAN.

The Abbot?

SIDROC.

Dunstan. He is first and last.
Methinks the muster of the Seculars
Is stronger than was looked for. What is this?
Hark! Hist! A hum as of a multitude
Without the gates. Permit me, Sirs. He comes.

Enter DUNSTAN *solus, clad in sackcloth, with ashes on his head and a missal in his hand. The foremost of the crowd fall upon their knees and bow their heads as he approaches.*

DUNSTAN.

Fear ye and tremble, ye that love the Church,
For wolves are round about her. Watch and pray.

[*Exit.*

SIDROC.

Pass on, pass on; the benches will be thronged.
Stick close to me, good father. God ha' mercy!
Sir, I beseech you to remit your elbow.

FIRST DEPUTY.

Keep order, constables! what a fray is here!

SIDROC.

Could we but pass this friar, all were won.
St. Hilda! what a mountain of a friar!
Sir, pray you die and do the Church some service;
You'd choke the way to Hell.—Now is the time;
Come, father, come; stick close to me; here, here.
'Knock down that chorister. I thank you, Sir.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII.

THE SYNODIAL CHAMBER.

All who passed through in the preceding Scene, are present in this. The Shrine of St. Augustin is discovered at the upper end, and there is a crucifix of large dimensions affixed to the wall above it. A Band of Monks in the Benedictine habit, with lighted tapers, are ranged in front of the Shrine, a file of them extending down each side of the Hall. At the lower end a band of Choristers are closing a service as the curtain rises.

ODO.

Friends, brethren, helpmates, councillors in Christ!
The dangers and divisions of the Church
Have called you hither. Be ye all as one.
For though the letter of citation saith
"*Semotis Laicis*," yet to one end
Are we assembled all,—concord and peace;
And whosoever hath God's peace at heart,
Him we rejoice to meet.
Since last I saw you here, that virtuous King,
The godly Edred, hath been hence translated,

And Edwin hath succeeded, who is young.
King Edwin, Sirs, descended of a House
Illustrious no less for piety
Than earthly honours, could not but abound
At first and by the fashioning of nature,
In Christian graces: but, Sirs, being young,
He through the easiness of youth betrayed
To bad advice, and making haste to err,
Did what was not convenient in a King.
For first from many a monastery, sown
Throughout the land in Edred's bounteous reign,
With violence and with force of arms he drave
Our Benedictine Brethren—not alone
Them that were placed by Edred in the shoes
Of Seculars that by Edred were expulsed,
But ancient men that had been there aforetime.
And next, Sirs, which is chiefly what concerns
Our present meeting,—next, Sirs, did he marry!
And whom, Sirs, did he marry? One like himself,
Though doubtless graced with many virtues, young
And erring, and in nothing more astray
Than in this marriage; being, as they are,

Cousins in the second degree and undispensed.
This marriage, Sirs, contracted by surprise,
Was scandalous, as ye know, to all good men,
And grievous to the Church ; and weighing well
What evil fruit to these and after times
Might of its hasty consummation grow,
We deemed it wise that this illustrious lady
Should visit Chester, there to live recluse,
Until the assembled Church of what had chanced
Were advertized. 'Tis therefore ye are here.
Councillors in Christ, the cause ye meet to judge
Is, briefly, shall this marriage stand, or no?

SIDROC (*aside to* WULFSTAN).

Stop; Cumba fumbles with the folds of his alb;
I think he'll speak; withhold yourself awhile.

ODO.

Sirs, I await your censures. For myself
I humbly seek instruction, which till I glean
From worthier men, my judgment shall be dumb.

CUMBA.

Most holy Fathers and my Brethren all!
To most of you 'tis known that from my youth

I have revered the Regulars ; excellent men,
Whom though to imitate had been in me,
Alas ! a vain endeavour, yet to praise
Hath been my constant care. Sirs, of this praise,
And of this reverence and constant care,
I will not bate a jot ; for what I was
At first, I am, and will be evermore.
But to the end unchangeable, the ways
Are various as the paths upon the sea ;
And though 'tis by the stars the vessel steers,
Yet lies she with the wind. The choice of ways
That opens to you now, doth split itself
Into two opposites—the ways of war,
The ways of peace ; and who betwixt the twain
Shall stand with dubious or divided heart ?
When hath the Church been prosperous but in peace ?
What multiplies the monasteries ? Peace.
What breeds endowments, treasures, and demesnes ?
Why peace. Then shall we not consult for peace ?
But if we void this marriage, peace is flown.
War that even now stands knocking at the gate,
Must then be bid come in ; nor present blows
Shall arbitrate an end, but years unborn

May in the issue of this marriage see
A hand, a sword, a claimant of the Crown
A cause of strife. I grant the marriage rash,
But out of common life this lesson cull:
A marriage unadvisedly contracted
By a hot stripling, in the parent's heart
Kindles a flame at first; but useless ire
Is transient with the wise; for were it not,
Age should in anger more exorbitate
Than youth in love. The parent pacified,
Binds by a frank forgiveness to himself
In bonds of gratitude his erring son:
And even as he his son, I deem the Church,
With reconciling and reclaiming love,
Should conquer back the King. My humble voice,
Bending to better judgments, thus concludes.

MORCAR.

O thou dead fly that spoilest the pot! O grub!
O maggot that dost grow to be a snake!
God spat thee out for being neither hot nor cold,
Thou Mammon's friend, and Lucifer licked thee up.
Woe to thee, Judas! Art thou not accursed?
O shame! O sin! oh havoc to the Church!

The Devil shall hang thee up to dry, thou rag!
For thou art soaked and saturate with sin.

ODO.

Forbear him, Brother.

MORCAR.

O thou filthy rag!

ODO.

I say, forbear him.

GODREDUD.

Brother, art thou mad?
He is no traitor, but a faithful priest.
Why dost thou rail upon him thus!

ODO.

Forbear.

MORCAR.

Cry out and cease not! saith the voice I hear—
Search out the sleights of Bel and slay the Dragon;
And who saith cease, be dumb!

ODO.

I say it, Brother;
Yea, I command thee cease. Our Brother Monn
Is wishful to be heard; speak, Brother Monn.

MONN.

My loving friends and Brethren, we are met
Upon this marriage, not to speak our own,
But to declare God's judgments, never yet
Made manifest by such apparent signs,
Such prodigies and portents. Think, oh, think
Upon the darkness of that marriage day!
Throughout the land a dismal horror spread;
In Essex it rained blood; at Evesham
An image of the Virgin, as ye know,
Was seen to weep, and sweat, and lift its hands,
And roll its eyes; at Selsey and at Wells
The vault of Heaven was filled with falling stars,
And fiery serpents weltered in the skies.
Have we forgotten that these things befell,
Or know we not their import? Then, alas!
Are we more careless of the cause of God
Than Gallio, more blind than Elymas.
But if we bear in mind that such things were,
We must not, dare not, judge what God hath judged.

GODREDUD.

The worthy Abbot, by my faith, my Lords,
Doth excellently well to bid us weigh

These miracles and signs. They signified,
Doubtless, some untoward events, my Lords;
But what those untoward events should be,
Behoves us not too rashly to deliver;
Divisions in the realm, it may be war,
Implacable revenge, and hatred dire,
And wrath, which wills not that its wounds be healed.
The birthday of a progeny like this
Would doubtless teem with warnings, which to pervert
Or put aside, should work us infinite woe;
But to those premonitions, further signs
Constructive and illustrative succeed,
And now two armies in the South and West
Auspiciously afoot, give countenance
To Edwin's cause as favoured from above,
And warn us, if fair terms of composition
Be offered, not to spurn them.

SIDROC (*aside to* WULFSTAN).

Now, now, now;
Stand up and speak—produce them.

WULFSTAN.

Here they are,
Most noble Godredud, here are the terms:

'I, Athulf, Earl, intent on sparing life,
But purposing to lodge my force in London
At latest in three days, to all concerned
Send greeting and say thus: All Regulars,
Since Edred's death supplanted, may return,
Save those who did themselves, in Edred's reign,
Supplant in benefices duly holden
The Secular Incumbents; the new Queen
Shall be received, and so soon as the Pope
Shall grant his dispensation, shall be crowned;
Which yielded, no man in his life or goods
Shall answer for the past.'—My Lords and Brethren,
These are the terms I bring you from Earl Athulf,
And I am Wulfstan.

(Acclamations from the Secular party, mingled with shouts of rage and execrations from the other.)

Brethren, hear me speak.
Brethren and friends, I fain would speak to you—
My friends and Brethren, hear me, I beseech you.

ODO.

My Sons, this passion and this noise, I hold
Unworthy this assembly. Hear him speak,

For he was never factious nor inflamed
Against us, and 'tis just that he be heard.

(*Acclamations from the Seculars.*)

WULFSTAN.

I am not factious, Brethren, nor inflamed;
For my abode was always, so to say,
On Mount Olympus—

MONN.

Fie upon thee, Pagan!
Oh, but I know thee and thy place full well.

WULFSTAN.

On Mount Olympus with the Muses nine
I ever dwelt . . . .

MONKS.

He doth confess it! Lo!
He doth confess it! Faggots and a stake!
He is a Heathen—shall a Heathen speak?

MORCAR.

I hear a voice that saith, 'Make lime of his bones.'

SIDROC.

Sirs, ye mistake him; he is a pious priest,
And what he means to say is merely this:

Against your orders and your monasteries
He speaks not; but he deems that holiest men,
If they would flourish in this warlike world,
Must feed within a fence of secular swords;
And better were it for you to engulf
But half the kingdom's treasure, so begirt,
Than to be left defenceless with the whole,
And thus be fattened but to feed the Dane.
He bids you know, that in this land this day
He finds more fat than bones, more monks than soldiers.
He bids you to the seabord look, where now
A fleet of Northmen, fifty-six tall ships,
Hang in St. George's Channel, waiting there
Till half the land shall cut each other's throats
And leave the other half a spoil to them.
Bethink you, then; escape ye hardly may
From the two puissant and prudent Earls,
Athulf and Leolf; but this granted you,
Ye do but fall a weak and present prey
To Sweyne and Olaf: wherefore make your choice,
And thrive in peace, or brave a twofold ruin.

PRIEST.

Well said!

MONK.

Who's this?

ANOTHER.

A lambskin man he is;

A fellow that puts his legs in lambskin hose.

MORCAR.

The Lord shall smite him with the botch of Egypt.

SEVERAL SECULAR PRIESTS, *joined by some of the Monks, (amidst clamour and confusion).*

We will have peace; we are not men of blood;

Are we not Christians all? The Dane—the Dane!

Are we not servants of the Prince of Peace?

The Northmen are upon us—Olaf and Sweyne!

[DUNSTAN *throws himself on his knees, and bows his head to the ground.*

SIDROC (*aside to* WULFSTAN).

He bends before the storm.

WULFSTAN.

Will he not speak?

SIDROC.

I know not—yes—he is in act to hatch

A brood of pestilent words, if I mistake not.

He stirs, he moves—few moments are enough.

WULFSTAN.

They say a louse that's but three minutes old
May be a grandsire; with no less a speed
Do foul thoughts gender.

SIDROC.

Ha! we'll see anon—
Faith of my body! up he goes—sit—sit.

DUNSTAN (*rising slowly*).

I groan in spirit. Brethren, seek not in me
Support or counsel. The whole head is sick,
The whole heart faint; and trouble and rebuke
Come round about me, thrusting at my soul.
But, Brethren, if long years of penance sore,
For your sake suffered, be remembered now,
Deem me not utterly of God forsaken,
Deem not yourselves forsaken. Lift up your hearts.
See where ye stand on earth; see how in heaven
Ye are regarded. Ye are the sons of God,
The Order of Melchisedeck, the Law,
The visible structure of the world of spirit,
Which was, and is, and must be; all things else
Are casual, and monarchs come and go,
And warriors for a season walk the earth,

By accident; for these are accidental,
But ye eternal; ye are the soul of the world,
Ye are the course of nature consecrate,
Ye are the Church! one spirit is throughout you,
And Christendom is with you in all lands.
Who comes against you? 'Scaped from Hell's confine
A wandering rebel, fleeting past the sun,
Darkens the visage of the Spouse of Christ.
But 'tis but for a moment; he consumed
Shall vanish like a vapour, she divulged
Break out in glory that transcends herself.
The thrones and principalities of earth,
When stood they that they stood not with the aid
Of us and them before us? Azarias,
Azias, Amaziah, Saul himself,
Fell they not headlong when they fell from us?
And Oza, he that did but touch the ark?
Oh then what sin for me, what sin for you,
For me victorious in a thousand fights
Against this foe, for you as oft redeemed,
That now we falter! Do we falter? No!
Thou God that art within me when I conquer,
I feel thee fill me now! Angelic Host,

Seraphs that wave your swords about my head,
I thank you for your succours! Who art thou
That givest me this gracious admonition?
Alas! forgive me that I knew thee not,
O Gabriel! I do as thou command'st,
Appealing from this earth and all its powers
To Christ upon the Cross: Oh Name Divine!
Is it Thy will that this the assembled Church
Should ratify these nuptials, yes or no?

A VOICE FROM THE CRUCIFIX.

ABSIT HOC UT FIAT! ABSIT HOC UT FIAT!

Most of the Assembly fall prostrate. There is a pause of some moments. Then DUNSTAN, *who had remained erect, with his hands stretched towards the Crucifix, resumes.*

DUNSTAN.

Oh precious guidance! Oh ineffable grace!
That dost from disobedience deliver
The hearts of even the faithless! We obey,
And these espousals do we now declare
Avoided and accursed. The woman espoused,
By name Elgiva, from the man called Edwy
We separate, and from the Church's pale
We cast her forth, and with her we cast forth

Those three that have been foremost to uphold her,
Earl Athulf, and Earl Leolf, and Earl Sidroc.
Them we proclaim, by sentence of the Pope,
From Christian rites and ministries cut off,
And from the holy Brotherhood of the Just
Sequestered with a curse. Be they accursed!
Accursed be they in all time and place,
Accursed be they in the camp and mart,
Accursed be they in the city and field,
Accursed be their flying and abiding,
Accursed be their waking and their rest—
We curse the hand that feeds them when they hunger,
We curse the arm that props them when they faint;
Withered and blasted be that hand and arm!
We curse the tongue that speaks to them, the ear
That hears them, though it be but unawares;
Blistered and cankered be that tongue and ear!
The earth in which their bodies shall be buried
We curse, except it cast their bodies out;
We shut the gates of Heaven against their souls,
And as this candle that I fling to the ground,
So be their light extinguished in the Pit!

MORCAR *and other monks.*

Amen ! So be it ! Be it so ! Amen !

SIDROC (*aside to* WULFSTAN).

The day is lost—away—skip—scud—begone.

[SIDROC *and* WULFSTAN, *with others of the Secular party, retire amidst the shouts and execrations of the Regulars.*

DUNSTAN.

Publish the miracle without the gates ;
Declare the sentence of the Pope.

ODO.

Fly hence !
Ye that are Secular ! They will rouse the people !
There will be violence and blood. Fly hence.
This Council is dismissed. The grace of God
Be with you all ! This Synod is dissolved.

[*The scene closes.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

TONBRIDGE CASTLE.

ATHULF *and* GRIMBALD.

ATHULF.

There—take my truncheon—Thou couldst rule my force
With more acceptance in the general mind
Than I. By Heaven, I am ashamed to see
Such bickerings in a Camp! Give me a cowl
And let me rule a Monastery rather.

GRIMBALD.

There—take my cap and bells—I'll rule your force,
And wisely too; but when I look for love
In change for wisdom from the multitude,
Give me again my good old cap and bells.

ATHULF.

Ah, Fool, you 're right—and that man is not wise
That cannot bear to be accounted foolish.

I must be patient. Yet it frets my heart,
Amongst my many cares, to be reviled
By shallow coxcombs whom I daily save,
Rescue, redeem, snatch from a rubbishy tomb
Amongst the ruins of their wits, pulled down
By their own hands upon their heads, God help them!
Well, I'll be patient. Fetch me the muster-roll.

[*Exit* GRIMBALD.

'Tis ill to bear though.

Enter SIDROC *and* WULFSTAN THE WISE.

Ha! my friends! in this
At least has Fortune favoured me. I feared
The tidings of our misadventurous Synod
Augured but ill for both of you. Well met!
Bonfires shall blaze for this. What! 'twas your heels,
I think, that brought you hither?

SIDROC.

As for myself,
When I am frightened I can run with wings,
Fast as an ostrich; but preserve me, Heaven!
From flying with Philosophy in hand!

ATHULF.

What! was our philosophic friend so slow?

SIDROC.

When I am flying for my life henceforth,
Welcome be any ordinary load—
Anchises on my back, if so ye will;
But spare me, Athulf, if you love your friend,
From bringing Wisdom with me.

WULFSTAN.

Well, my Lords,
I will not cumber you again. Farewell!
I will return—

SIDROC.

To Mount Olympus.

WULFSTAN.

Yes,
To such a sanctuary as that was once.
So tranquil were the elements there, 'tis said
That letters by the finger of the Priest
Writ in the ashes of the sacrifice,
Remained throughout the seasons uneffaced.
And Oxford now hath academic bowers
Sacred to many a Muse, where such as I
May write, though in a rough, tempestuous age,
What Time shall spare. Thither, my Lords, I'll go,
And there I'll chronicle your deeds. Farewell.

ATHULF.

Farewell, good Wulfstan ; and I speak the word
With reverence and love ; for gifts like yours
Are all unworthy to be wasted here.
But take this with you ;—wild and unreclaimed
As doubtless must appear to yours my wit,
Yet you have scattered in that wilderness
Some seeds that will not perish. Fare you well.

WULFSTAN.

My Lord, your kindness which doth cause these drops
Will pardon them.

ATHULF.

God keep you in His peace!
If good you hear of us, you will rejoice ;
If evil, you are not so chilled by age,
But that you'll mourn.

WULFSTAN.

Long, long, my Lord, if long
I live to mourn,—which may not be ! 'Tis true
The sharpness of our pangs is less in age,
As sounds are muffled by the falling snow ;
But true no less, that what age faintly feels
It flings not off. I'll pray for your success.

[*Exit.*

ATHULF.

The miracle of the time is that old man !
And kind as wise—my own eyes, too, are moistened—
Yet he'll forget us ere the Sun go down.

SIDROC.

Then I beseech you to forget him now,
And tell me of your counsels and intents.

ATHULF.

Thus do I stand : My letters from the North
Advise me that the Queen's impatient heart
Brooks not prolonged captivity, and burns
To jeopardise herself, and with herself,
Leolf and all his power, in rash attempts
At premature escape. Meanwhile the Dane
Lurks in the Irish Sea, till civil strife,
The needfullest resources draining last,
Disarms the seabord, and, as well may hap,
Disables us within. My army here
Frets at the Pope's anathema. This pause
Disheartens it besides, and I am blamed,
As though I lingered here through lack of heart.
There is a fortitude in standing still
Which leaders know, but they that follow, never.

Daily I hear ten thousand tongues cry out
'Forward to London,' and I stir not. Still
I must not stand upon this strength too long,
And truth to say, the levies that come now
Are scarcely worth the waiting for. That bann
Dispersed them on their way. All which revolved
I meditate to make a sudden march,
And seize the Tower by night.

SIDROC.

I am with you there.
The more, that we have friends within the walls.
That wily wench who carried in your letters
Remains behind, and unsuspected still.

ATHULF.

Moreover, she hath with her store of gold.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

LONDON. AN APARTMENT IN THE TOWER.

DUNSTAN *and* GURMO.

DUNSTAN.

Whence com'st thou? From the King? Is he awake?

GURMO.

He is.

DUNSTAN.

How slept he? Soundly through the night?

GURMO.

He did.

DUNSTAN.

Why how? did not the dogs then bark?

GURMO.

Yes; he slept still.

DUNSTAN.

The watches of the night
Are changed too seldom. Once an hour henceforth
Let them be changed, and ever as they change
Let drums and trumpets sound.

GURMO.

Her Majesty
Has waited long. Likewise the Primate.

DUNSTAN.

Whew!
I had forgotten them. Conduct them hither.

[*Exit* GURMO.

The fear, but not the fact, of death . . . if this,
This only should suffice,—why then my soul
Should find a free deliverance to the work,
And after, hold its state more cheerfully.
If not, the darkness of the mortal fact
Shall yet be kindled by a light divine.

Enter the QUEEN MOTHER *and* ODO.

Content you, Madam. Let me hear no more.
You have another and a better son.
Though this should not deserve to reign nor live,—
As he is truly dead in his offence
Already, yea, and stinketh,—yet should that
Applausively succeed. I say no more;
But leave to me the working out God's will
Touching them both.

THE QUEEN MOTHER.

My Lord, yourself was witness
How hardy and how stout he was against me,
And how most filthily by word of mouth
He spat upon me, so to say, and railed
Foully with evil speaking from his heart,
Renouncing and disowning me for ay,
Likewise the ten commandments. Yet, my Lord,
He is my son—this womb did bring him forth—
You know not what it is to be a mother!
I do beseech you, spare him!

DUNSTAN.

To what end?
For God's behoof, or yours, or his, or whose?

THE QUEEN MOTHER.

Speak, my Lord Primate; bid him to spare my son.

DUNSTAN.

Who biddeth me?

ODO.

Lord Abbot, by mine office
I might be bold to speak by way of bidding;
Yet still remembering thine unrivalled merits
And services to God, I say but this:

The times are evil; accidents may come,
Yielding occasion of exceeding malice,
With havoc to the Church, and injury
And backward sliding, if beyond the range
Of Christian prudence, through inordinate zeal,
We push our present promise of success.
For of one colour though the city be,
And neighbouring shires the same, still is the land,
Eastward and northward specially, a web
Diversely diapered; for here the weft
Is spun of light, and dipped in dies of Heaven;
There, dyed in Styx, and spun of Satan's slaver.
We may not think that Athulf, who is held
To number twenty thousand, will be scared
By caps of citizens tossed up i' the air;
Nor may we count upon the citizens' caps
For courses which may seem to some extreme.
Wherefore behoves us so to use success,
As not to raise against us those, though erring,
Whose honest zeal stands stoutly for the crown,
Demanding strict succession.

DUNSTAN.

Be content.

Though neither law nor usage of the realm
Did ever yet demand what these demand,
Nor ever yet did honesty so err,
Still have I pondered all. The godless King
Shall abdicate; he shall not be removed.

ODO.

If reason should so work with him at length
That such should be his choice, 't were excellent.

DUNSTAN.

Since he was crowned, experience, by my hand
Directed, hath admonished him to deem
The state of Kings unenviable. Now
He shall be tutored to perceive the joys
Of privateness, best fitted for his years.
I pray you meddle not. Nor, Madam, you.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A PRECINCT OF THE TOWER.

ETHILDA *and* EMMA.

ETHILDA.

They will not; for they say that I am watched,
And to find entrance to the King for me
Should bring a double danger; but for you
They would attempt it. At the hour of nones
The Abbot will be with him, after which
You will have least to fear.

EMMA.

Unless a ghost
Stand in the doorway, terror is there none
Can let or hinder me.

ETHILDA.

Where is your father?

EMMA.

Fled with Earl Sidroc. We shall meet ere night.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

A CHAMBER IN THE TOWER.

DUNSTAN *and* EDWIN.

DUNSTAN.

How does your Grace?

EDWIN.

What need for you to ask?

Let me remind you of an antique verse:

What sent the Messengers to Hell
Was asking what they knew full well.

You know that I am ill and very weak.

DUNSTAN.

You do not answer with a weakened wit.

Is there offence in this my visitation?

If so, I leave you.

EDWIN.

Yes, there is offence.

And yet I would not you should go. Offence

Is better than this blank of solitude.

I am so weary of no company,

That I could almost welcome to these walls
The Devil and his Angels. You may stay.

DUNSTAN.

What makes you weak? Do you not like your food,
Or have you not enough?

EDWIN.

Enough is brought;
But he that brings it drops what seems to say
That it is mixed with poison—some slow drug;
So that I scarce dare eat, and hunger always.

DUNSTAN.

Your food is poisoned by your own suspicions.
'Tis your own fault. Tho' Gurmo's zeal is great,
It is impossible he should so exceed
As to put poison in your food, I think.
But thus it is with Kings; suspicions haunt
And dangers press around them all their days;
Ambition galls them, luxury corrupts,
And wars and treasons are their talk at table.

EDWIN.

This homily you should read to prosperous kings;
It is not needed for a king like me.

DUNSTAN.

Who shall read homilies to a prosperous King!
'Twas not long since that thou didst seem to prosper,
And then I warned thee; and with what event
Thou knowest; for thy heart was high in pride.
A hope that, like Herodias, danced before thee
Did ask my head. But I reproach thee not.
Much rather would I, seeing thee abased,
Lift up thy mind to wisdom.

EDWIN.

Heretofore
It was not in my thoughts to take thy head;
But should I reign again . . . Come then, this wisdom
That thou wouldst teach me. Harmless as the dove
I have been whilome; let me now, tho' late,
Learn from the serpent.

DUNSTAN.

To thy credulous ears
The world, or what is to a King the world,
The triflers of thy Court, have imaged me
As cruel and insensible to joy,
Austere and ignorant of all delights
That arts can minister. Far from the truth

They wander who say thus. I but denounce
Loves on a throne, and pleasures out of place.
I am not old; not twenty years have fled
Since I was young as thou; and in my youth
I was not by those pleasures unapproached
Which youth converses with.

EDWIN.

No! wast thou not?
How came they in thy sight?

DUNSTAN.

When Satan first
Attempted me, 'twas in a woman's shape;
Such shape as may have erst misled mankind,
When Greece or Rome upreared with Pagan rites
Temples to Venus, pictured there or carved
With rounded, polished, and exuberant grace,
And mien whose dimpled changefulness betrayed,
Thro' jocund hues, the seriousness of passion.
I was attempted thus, and Satan sang
With female pipe and melodies that thrilled
The softened soul, of mild voluptuous ease
And tender sports that chased the kindling hours
In odorous gardens or on terraces,

To music of the fountains and the birds,
Or else in skirting groves by sunshine smitten,
Or warm winds kissed, whilst we from shine to shade
Roved unregarded. Yes, 'twas Satan sang,
Because 'twas sung to me, whom God had called
To other pastime and severer joys.
But were it not for this, God's strict behest
Enjoined upon me,—had I not been vowed
To holiest service rigorously required,
I should have owned it for an Angel's voice,
Nor ever could an earthly crown, or toys
And childishness of vain ambition, gauds
And tinsels of the world, have lured my heart
Into the tangle of those mortal cares
That gather round a throne. What call is thine
From God or Man, what voice within bids thee
Such pleasures to forego, such cares confront?

EDWIN.

What voice? My Kingdom's voice—my People's cry,
Whom ye devour—the wail of shepherds true
Over their flocks, those godly, kindly Priests,
That love my people and love me withal—
Their voice requires me and the voice of Kings

Who died with honour and who live in me,
The voice of Egbert, Ethelbert, and Alfred.
What wouldst thou more? the voice of Kings unborn,
To whom my sceptre and my blood descends—
A thousand voices call me!

DUNSTAN.

Sir, not so.
The voices of this people and those Kings
Call on Prince Edgar, not on thee, to reign.
There is a voice calls thee, but not to reign,
The voice of her thou fain wouldst take to wife;
An excommunicated wretch she is
Even now, and if thy lust of kingly power
Outbid thine other lusts, and starken thee
In grasping of that shadow of a sceptre
That still is left thee, 'tis a dying voice.
For know—unless thou by an instant act
Renounce the crown, Elgiva shall not live.
The deed is ready, to which thy name affixed
Discharges from restraint both her and thee.
Say wilt thou sign?

EDWIN.

I will not.

DUNSTAN.

Be advised.
What hast thou to surrender? I look round;
This chamber is thy palace, court, and realm.
I do not see the crown. Where is it hidden?
Is that thy throne? why 'tis a base joint-stool;
Or this thy sceptre? 'tis an ashen stick,
Notched with the days of thy captivity.
Such royalties to abdicate, methinks,
Should hardly hold thee long. Nay, I myself,
That love not ladies greatly, would give these
To ransom whom I loved.

EDWIN.

If all I have
Be nothing worth, why ask'st thou me to give it?
I trust thee not. I deem myself a King.
But let me go at large, and knowing then
How stands my realm, what's lost and what remains,
I'll answer thee.

DUNSTAN.

Now, now, I bid thee answer.
Anon I bring the parchment that redeems

Another and thyself, both from captivity,
And one from worse. I bid thee be prepared.

[*Exit.*

EDWIN.

Elgiva! for thy ransom, life were little,
A Kingdom in itself of no account.
But oh! an abject and unkingly act
Done by a King, and as his foes will say,
To save himself in his extremity,—
This is a purchase thou thyself wilt scorn,
Although thyself the rescued. Yet, oh! yet...
What step is this?

Enter EMMA.

EMMA.

My Lord, the Abbot comes,
And I am here at peril of my life . . .
This from Earl Leolf . . . it says the Queen is safe . . .
No more or I am lost . . . Earl Athulf . . . nay . . .

[*Exit.*

EDWIN (*after reading the letter*).

Farewell, then, loved Elgiva! I shall die,
As now I may, with honour from mankind,

And no one in thine ear shall dare to breathe
A defamation of my Kingly name.
They shall not say but that I died a King,
And like a King in my regalities.

Re-enter DUNSTAN (*holding a scroll*).

DUNSTAN.

Thy signature to this.

EDWIN.

I will not sign.

DUNSTAN.

Thou wilt not! Wilt thou that thy mistress die?

EDWIN.

Insulting Abbot! she is not my mistress;
She is my wife, my Queen.

DUNSTAN.

Predestinate Pair!
He knoweth who is the Searcher of our hearts,
That I was ever backward to take life,
Albeit at His command. Still have I striven
To put aside that service, seeking still
All ways and shifts that wit of man could scheme,
To spare the cutting off your wretched souls
In unrepented sin. But tendering here

Terms of redemption, it is thou, not I,
The sentence that deliverest.

EDWIN.

Our lives
Are in God's hands.

DUNSTAN.

Sot, Liar, Miscreant, No!
God puts them into mine! and may my soul
In tortures howl away eternity
If ever again it yield to that false fear
That turned me from the shedding of thy blood!
Thy blood, rash traitor to thy God, thy blood!
Thou delicate Agag, I will spill thy blood!
Ho, Gurmo! . . . I have sinned like Saul. . . What, ho!
Gurmo, I say . . . the sword of Samuel . . . Ho!

Enter GURMO.

Thou knowest thine office. Let me see thee soon.

[*Exit.*

GURMO (*falling on his knees*).

Mercy, my Lord! I pray your Grace to spare me.

EDWIN.

Mercy for thee! What mercy canst thou show?
Yet thou art but another's senseless weapon,

And if thou needs must do thy bloody work,
Strike ; I forgive thee.

GURMO.

Gracious Lord, not I.

EDWIN.

Then I may have some minutes more to live.
But if thou falter, soon will the Abbot find
A readier hand.

GURMO.

He knows not what I know.

EDWIN.

What dost thou know ?

GURMO.

Hark ! hear you not, my Lord?

(*Trumpets are heard without the walls.*)

Trumpets and shouts ! Anon they storm the Tower.

EDWIN.

'Tis Athulf's cry ! the Guards are gone ! 'Tis he !

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

A GARDEN WITHIN THE WALLS OF CHESTER CASTLE.

ELGIVA (*alone*).

ELGIVA.

How pleasant it might seem to a bird of the air
Passing upon the wing, or aught that 's free
In this delightful garden to abide,
And be a captive ever. Make me free,
And I myself should linger on this ground,
Reluctant to depart. But as I am,
The shadow of the imprisoned spirit falls
On everything around; the warbling thrush
Is tedious in the telling of his loves.
The perfume of the wallflower taints the air.
And yet in much of this adornment lurks
A lover's hand. They gave me to the ward
Of age and bitterness in Ruold's father,
Forgetting Ruold's father had a son.
I am his captive and he mine, poor youth!
For though they stripped me of my royalties,

In the prerogatives of beauty still
I found myself acknowledged. Ah! he comes.
He shall have audience. No, he 's not alone.
I'll hide my head awhile. 'Tis Sigeric.

[*Retires into an arbour.*

Enter RUOLD *and* SIGERIC.

SIGERIC.

The King thus rescued from that imminent fate,
The cry was now for Dunstan. Where was he?
For with his traitorous head should he atone
The meditation of that mortal blow
Which he had all but dealt. So where was he?
Gone! Vanished! Not a footstep to be found!
Whether by transformation magical,
Or subterranean egress, known to him
And not to others,—by what means I say not,—
But gone he was; and Sidroc in pursuit
Went babbling like a buckhound all abroad
That vainly seeks the slot. His creature, too,
Gruff Gurmo, disappeared.

RUOLD.

Ere long, be sure,
He will be heard of.

SIGERIC.

Should he gain the coast,
'Tis thought he'll cross to Flanders. Either way
The Primate, unto whom the King speaks fair,
Demurs not to his banishment, if so
The Kingdom's wounds be healed; and with this word
He sends me to be present on his part
At Edgar's Wittenagemót. When meets it?

RUOLD.

'Tis summoned for the vigil of St. Chad
At Malpas, whither is my father gone
Since yesterday. He went ensuing peace,
Constrained, though last to be constrained, to own
That peace is needful. Not a day but teems
With tidings of the Dane. He threatens now
The coasts of Somerset and Severn's mouth.
This, with the loss of Dunstan from our ranks,
And Odo's inclination, looks one way.

SIGERIC.

I think it brings us peace.

RUOLD.

Which seen, my friend,
Advise me, I beseech you. What results?

A peace is made, my father last to join
The general voice, and odious more than others
As the Queen's gaoler.—How shall fare his head?

SIGERIC.

He must be cared for in the composition;
An amnesty for all, and him by name,
Must stand upon the treaty.

RUOLD.

Who shall trust it?
My friend, the terms that I would trust are terms
For service rendered.

SIGERIC.

If I know your drift,
You would let loose the Queen.

RUOLD.

And wherefore not?

SIGERIC.

As servant of the Primate and the State
I say God speed you in your bold intent.
In private, as your father's friend and yours,
I bid you to beware. If peace be made,
And you have still been constant to your charge,
It is but, at the worst, uncertainties
That hang about you. But if peace be missed,

And you have set at large this Royal hostage,
The very aim and purport of the war,
It shall be then no question nor surmise
What shall befall you.

RUOLD.

If there were not danger,
Where were the service that could claim reward?
Keep you my counsel for my father's sake,
And if at Malpas when you meet the Witan
You hear a rumour of the Queen escaped,
Call it a misadventure and mischance.

SIGÉRIC.

Save what shall reach me when I'm gone from hence
I shall know nought. God send you well to fare!

[*Exit.*

RUOLD.

I thank you, worthy Sigeric. Farewell.
Elgiva! Royal Mistress! Beautiful Queen!
I would the danger to my head were more,
Lest thou shouldst deem it but a politic cast,
And not a loyal venture.

Re-enter ELGIVA.

ELGIVA.

My good Ruold,

'Twas Sigeric went from you, was it not?
What tidings brought he?

RUOLD.

Madam, he confirms
Our yesterday's intelligence. The King
Is rescued by Earl Athulf. Dunstan is fled.
And there is this additional,—Ethilda
Is to Earl Athulf solemnly betrothed,
Though yet the nuptials are not; for the Pope
To Dunstan only gave authority
The sentence which he uttered to revoke;
And whilst the Earl is excommunicate,
The Princess to the marriage doth demur.

ELGIVA.

Her heart was ever scrupulous, and splits
Betwixt the Pope and Athulf. Notwithstanding,
Athulf will prosper. Ah! my faithful Ruold,
Now must I put thy loyalty to proof.
The letters from Earl Leolf that were brought
Are full of comfort. He is in force at Audley;
And with a light and deftly mounted troop,
In cover of the night could come to Tilston,
And me, there meeting him, could carry thence,

And pass the interspace of hostile ground
Ere break of day. No more of doubtful looks,
Dear, faithful Ruold. I must brush away
These cobwebs from thy brow—Ah, now 'tis clear,
Free, frank, and noble !—Well, what answer, Ruold ?

RUOLD.

My Royal Mistress, doubts if I have had,
They were not craven nor disloyal doubts ;
They were but such as fear for you proposed,
Not for myself ; and now my fears are less,
My faith the same ; my answer is, then,—go,
Go at your gracious pleasure, if your flight
Be deemed more safe than your captivity.

ELGIVA.

Oh ! I am sick of safety in a prison.
Give me that dangerous liberty I seek,
And through the tossings of one turbulent night
Let me descry the harbour of my home,
With waving hands and welcomings of friends,
When mid the shoutings of the multitude
I shoot triumphant o'er the perilous bar,
And pass at once to gladness and to peace.

RUOLD.

Even be it as you will. But stir not yet.
Wait till the Lords have drawn their forces in
And gathered to the Wittenagemót.
Then shall you send to Leolf, and appoint
The period of your flight.

ELGIVA.

'Twill not be long,
Good Ruold, will it? I will try to wait.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

A HEATH IN HAMPSHIRE.

DUNSTAN *and* GURMO *in flight.*

DUNSTAN.

The night shall shield us like a raven's wing.
What hear'st thou in the wind?

GURMO.

A moaning cry.

DUNSTAN.

Thou faint'st with hunger.

GURMO.

Can I fast so long
And not be hungry?

DUNSTAN.

'Tis the cry of a wolf,
And he is hungry too. Make forward still.

GURMO.

I see a light.

DUNSTAN.

Hist! in the lull of the wind
I hear the stroke of hammers. On apace!
It is a blacksmith's forge. I'll harbour there.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A BLACKSMITH'S FORGE.

The BLACKSMITH *at work.* SERFS *and* BOORS *dropping in, with a* MONK *and others.*

BLACKSMITH (*blowing the bellows, and singing*).

But now I wax old,
Sich, sorry, and cold,
Like much upon mould
I widder away.

FIRST BOOR.

Look, thou horse-cobbler; call'st thou this a shoe?
I know thee: since the slaughter at the ford,
Thou'rt warming old ones up.

BLACKSMITH.

Oh me, St. Giles!

SECOND BOOR.

And mark this coulter; look you at this mattock.

MONK.

Repent, and do thy work more workmanlike,
Or in a twinkling thou shalt him behold
That came to holy Dunstan's forge unbid,
And staid unwilling. Marry, Sir, thy tongs
Would touch him not, and he is roaming now
Through all the land.

THIRD BOOR.

'Tis true; I saw myself
The print of his hoof. 'Twas in Dame Umfrieg's garth;
And Father Ægelpig discovered it.
'Twas like a goat's.

MONK.

My son, he's there and here
And everywhere, since that most holy man,
The Abbot Dunstan, by the godless King
Was driven away.

FOURTH BOOR.

I've sent for Father Cridda,
To bless and exorcise my cattle and swine.

MONK.

Thou hast done well ; but thy best safety lies
In holy Dunstan's prayers. At Winchester
Ye heard how in the west end of the church,
The night that Dunstan fled, the Devil skipped,
And with great laughter, in his roaring fashion,
Took up his ' O be joyful!' Who are these ?
A brother of mine order is the one,
If I mistake not. Benedicite !

Enter DUNSTAN *and* GURMO.

DUNSTAN.

God save you! holy Brother: Sons, and you !
We seek for shelter from the coming storm.

BLACKSMITH.

Father, you 're welcome.

MONK.

Come ye from the South ?

DUNSTAN.

From London last.

MONK.

From London ? yea, indeed !
What tidings bring ye then ?

DUNSTAN.

What would ye know?

MONK.

Canst thou be so insensible to ask?
The holy Abbot Dunstan—where is he?
What fate attends him?

DUNSTAN.

That we know not yet.

BLACKSMITH.

A price is on his head—ten thousand marks.
Lilla, the King's Gerefa of the shire,
Proclaimed it far and wide.

DUNSTAN.

Give me thy hammer;
Thou canst not make a coulter so; look here;
Strike endways—thus—and thus. What said the shire
To Lilla's proclamation? Was it welcomed?

MONK.

Torn down, and trampled in the mud. This shire
Will yield them many a Peter with his sword,
But ne'er a Judas.

DUNSTAN.

Is the shire so hot
In Dunstan's cause?

MONK.

It kindles hourly. Nay,
'Tis said that Lilla and his men were met
On Chilton-down by fifteen hundred boors,
And scantly saved themselves by flight.

FIRST BOOR.

'Tis true;
'Twas Titchbourne township that turned out the first;
But we of Droxford will be up betimes;
See if we be not.

DUNSTAN.

If ye be, my friends,
The Abbot will be presently amongst you;
For this way comes he, having in his mind
To cross the sea to Flanders. But, my friends,
If ye be hearty in the cause of God,
Ye will not let him go. Shame to this shire,
Shame be to England and to Christendom!
If he that fasted and that watched for you,
And day by day, to save your perishing souls,
Flayed his poor body streaming down with blood,—
Shame to your country and yourselves, if he
Should flee before the wicked!

BOORS.

We'll rise! we'll rise!
It never shall be said. He shall not flee.

DUNSTAN.

He will not, if ye stead him in his peril.
But ye must be alert. Go forth this night,
This very night go forth, and call your fellows
In all the hamlets round, to meet at Stoke
By dawn to-morrow. Thither Dunstan comes,
And ye shall bid him go no farther forth.

MONK.

What! Dunstan's very self! will he be there?

DUNSTAN.

I say he will.

SECOND BOOR.

Then, mattock, go thy ways;
I'll run to meet him.

THIRD BOOR.

All—we all must run.
We all have souls!

MONK.

Come to the Abbey first,
And ye shall have your doublets lined with mead,

Wherewith defended ye may face the storm,
Flying from house to house, and send the news
From village on to village.

BLACKSMITH.

And, Father, you,
And this your friend, shall rest the while with me.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

DERBY.

EDWIN *and* ATHULF.

ATHULF.

With patience we shall prosper. Patience only
Is wanting to us now.

EDWIN.

Nay, do not chide me.
I have been patient in a prison, Athulf;
Patient of wrongs, and cruelties, and threats,
Sickness and imminent death; but this is worse,—
To be at large, and yet be checked and curbed,
When now my wife's deliverance only waits
On my advance.

ATHULF.

With measured speed we pass
To an assured result. With hurried steps
We should but bring the shadow of an army
To issues that would then be full of doubt.
Our marches are too hasty, and the force
Begins to break. Pause, I beseech you.

EDWIN.

Well;
You are a soldier tried in many a field;
And I am but a King. Have, then, your way.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

AUDLEY IN STAFFORDSHIRE.

LEOLF *and* EMMA.

EMMA.

Could not the Queen await the coming up
Of the King's army? Must she hazard yours?

LEOLF.

My army moves not. A few mounted Thanes
Alone go with me. No, she hazards nothing,—
Nothing that's worth a care, except herself.

EMMA.

She hazards all.

LEOLF.

True, for her safety's sake
I could have wished her to let Time declare
What shall ensue at Malpas. But the signs
Bid fair for peace, and barring misadventure . . .

EMMA.

'Tis a rash reckoning in such times as these
That bars a misadventure.

LEOLF.

Nay, not so.
With Dunstan fled the spirit of the storm,
And Indiscretion, that was fain to hide
Its battered plumage, now may gambol forth
On bolder wing.—Earl Sidroc, by my life.
Welcome to Audley!

Enter SIDROC.

SIDROC.

Nay, my Lord Heretoch, nay;
Before you make me welcome, hear my news.

LEOLF.

No, you are welcome. If your news be bad,

Welcome the more, for then the more 's the need
Of your good counsel.

SIDROC.

Dunstan is at large.
Nay more, has joined the Wittenagemót.
I chased him to the coast, where in a night
The boors of Hampshire rose five thousand strong
And snatched him from my hands.

LEOLF.

At Malpas now!
Already there!

SIDROC.

I fear he is indeed.
But have you then no tidings? Hear you not
From Malpas?

LEOLF.

We had looked to hear anon.
There comes a fellow with an open mouth
And eager eye.

Enter MESSENGER.

The sequel? Speak, my friend;
What more beside the message in thy face?

MESSENGER.

The Abbot is at Malpas.

LEOLF.

That we knew,
Or nearly knew. What hath he done at Malpas?

MESSENGER.

He called the Wittenagemót together,
And bade them never more to speak of peace
Until the Church were founded in her rights.

LEOLF.

And he was heard?

MESSENGER.

He was opposed by some
That stood around him, but the floor fell in,
And they went headlong; on the only beam
That brake not, Dunstan, standing undismayed,
Stretched forth his arm and bade the multitude
Confess the hand of God.

SIDROC.

By Peter's Keys,
Another miracle, and a murder too,
Done by this cunning carpenter!

LEOLF.

What ensued
Needs not be asked. Peace was renounced, no doubt?

MESSENGER.

It was, my Lord.

EMMA.

The salvage may be high
But something there is saved by this. The Queen
Will now sit close.

LEOLF.

I know not that. Another
Would do so; but adversity, to some
So sedative, to others is a goad.
Aught that disturbs her, hurries her to act.
—Then hears the King, her husband, of her peril,
And he is hurried past his reason too.—
I pray you come. But Ernway, get you ready
To carry letters south.

[*Exeunt* LEOLF *and* SIDROC.

EMMA.

Now will he write
Commending care and patience to the King.
I will go with thee, Ernway; and it may be
My counsel with the King on this affair
Will weigh as heavy as the Heretoch's.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

MALPAS.

DUNSTAN *surrounded by Ealdermen and Military Leaders of the Monastic Party.*

DUNSTAN.

No more of Wittenagemóts—no more—
Councils and Courts we want not.—Get ye back,
Back to your posts, and pluck me forth your swords,
And let me hear your valiant deeds resound,
And not your empty phrases. Ecfrid, Gorf,
Look to your charges—Nantwich stands exposed—
Whitchurch lies open to the enemy—
Burley and Baddeley have sold themselves—
Wistaston is as naked as Godiva,
And not so honest. Eadbald, Ida, Brand,
What seek ye here, when honour is in the field?
Forth to your charges!—What! Ceolwulf too!

Enter the Coastwardens, CEOLWULF *and* ÆTHELRIC.

And Æthelric! Why come ye hither, Sirs?
Must ye too have your parley and your prate,

And leave your charges in extremity
To join this gossiping Gemót? St. Bride!
Is Somerset not worth your pains, my Lords,
Or hath the Dane, too, from the seabord slunk,
To prattle about peace?

CEOLWULF.

Lord Abbot, hear us;
We are not come . . . . .

DUNSTAN.

Not come to pule and prate?
What are ye come for? If aught else ye seek,
Ye seek it where it is not. Back to your charge!

ÆTHELRIC.

You will not hear, my Lord. We have no charge—
We have no force. Our men are slain—ourselves
Escaped by miracle. The Northmen, led
By Sweyne and Olaf, landed yesternight
In Porlock Bay and clipped us round at Stoke,—
And thinned as we had been, we fell perforce
An easy prey. Not twenty men are left
To tell the tale.

DUNSTAN.

In Porlock Bay! At Stoke!

—Have I not bid you to your posts, my Lords,
And must I bid you twice? Get ye hence all.
If news ye came for, ye have heard it.—Stop,
Ceolwulf. Whither go the Northmen next?

CEOLWULF.

To Glastonbury it is thought, my Lord.

DUNSTAN.

To Glastonbury do they go? Alas!
My Mother there lies sick.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.

ASHBORN IN DERBYSHIRE.

EDWIN *and* ATHULF.

EDWIN.

Still this is gained,—the everlasting word
'Halt!' shall be heard no more; and never more
Shall my heart sicken at its detested sound.
Now, thinking of Elgiva close at hand,
We shall be filled with her victorious spirit.

ATHULF.

I would to God that I could think her wise.

All is in jeopardy thro' her. By Heaven!
I know not which is worst—to come too late,
Or come with broken strength.

EDWIN.

To come too late
Is worst by far. When Leolf went from Audley,
'Tis true he bade us to beware of haste;
But then he knew not that the enemy's force
Would move on Nantwich, which, with his own at Lea,
Shall cheek by jowl bring them, whilst us it leaves
More laggard than we were.

ATHULF.

I'll stake my head
'Twas ne'er by Leolf's wish his force was moved
So far as Lea. But be it so or not,
'Twas moved in error; it can bring no aid
To Leolf and Elgiva; rather, I fear,
'Twill draw the forces of the enemy down
Upon the very wayside of their flight.
Still moved it is—and I deny not now
That we should follow at our best of speed.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII.

NIGHT. A COPPICE NEAR ACTON IN CHESHIRE.

In front is a mortstone. Enter certain RETAINERS *and* SERVANTS *of* LEOLF.

FIRST SERVANT.

This is the road, bring up the horses, ho!
Hark! heard'st thou aught? If Dunstan knew, my friends,
He'd ope his book and read a verse of power,
And send a Goblin that should . . . . . .

SECOND SERVANT.

Hush! Thou fool!
Is it not hither the Earl should come?

FIRST SERVANT.

'Tis here.
Six furlongs from the chapel. What is this?
Oh me! the mortstone! No it is not here,
'Tis further on.

THIRD SERVANT.

See'st thou not something white?

FIRST SERVANT.

Jesu Maria save us! 'tis a Spirit.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter LEOLF *and* ELGIVA.

LEOLF.

Fresh horses should have met us here. What chance
Hath hindered them, I know not; we must wait
Till these be rested. Here is a rude stone-seat;
We may rest likewise.

ELGIVA.

Is there danger still?

LEOLF.

But little here; the dangers of the road,
I trust, are left behind.

ELGIVA.

Oh Leolf! much
I owe you, and if aught a kingdom's wealth
Affords, could pay the debt . . . .

LEOLF.

A kingdom's wealth!
Elgiva! by the heart the heart is paid.
You have your kingdom, my heart hath its love.
We are provided.

ELGIVA.

Oh! in deeds so kind,
And can you be so bitter in your words!
Have I no offerings of the heart, wherewith
Love's service to requite?

LEOLF.

The least of boons
Scattered by Royal charity's careless hand
O'erpays my service. To requite the rest,
All you possess is but a bankrupt's bond.
This is the last time we shall speak together;
Forgive me, therefore, if my speech be bold.
I loved you once; and in such sort I loved,
That anguish hath but burnt the image in,
And I must bear it with me to my grave.
I loved you once; dearest Elgiva, yes,
Even now my heart doth feed upon that love
As in its flower and freshness, ere the grace
And beauty of the fashion of it perished.
It was too anxious to be fortunate,
And it must now be buried, self-embalmed.
Within my breast, or living there recluse,
Talk to itself and traffick with itself;

And like a miser that puts nothing out,
And asks for no return, must I tell o'er
The treasures of the past.

ELGIVA.

Can no return
Be rendered? And is gratitude then nothing?

LEOLF.

To me 'tis nothing—being less than love.
But cherish it as to your own soul precious!
The heavenliest lot that earthly natures know,
Is to be affluent in gratitude.
Be grateful and be happy. For myself,
If sorrow be my portion, yet shall hope,
That springs from sorrow and aspires to Heaven,
Be with me still. When this disastrous war
Is ended, I shall quit my country's shores,
A pilgrim and a suitor to the love
Which dies not nor betrays.—What cry is that?
I thought I heard a voice.

ELGIVA.

Oh Leolf, Leolf!
So tender, so severe!

LEOLF.

Mistake me not.
I would not be unjust. I have not been;
Now less than ever could I be, for now
A sacred and judicial calmness holds
Its mirror to my soul; at once disclosed
The picture of the past presents itself
Minute yet vivid, such as it is seen
In his last moments by a drowning man.
Look at this skeleton of a once green leaf:
Time and the elements conspired its fall;
The worm hath eaten out the tenderer parts,
And left this curious anatomy
Distinct of structure—made so by decay.
So, at this moment, lies my life before me,—
In all its intricacies, all its errors—
And can I be unjust?

ELGIVA.

Oh, more than just,
Most merciful in judgment have you been,
And even in censure kind.

LEOLF.

Our lives were linked

By one misfortune and a double fault.
It was my folly to have fixed my hopes
Upon the fruitage of a budding heart.
It was your fault,—the lighter fault by far,—
Being the bud to seem to be the berry.
The first inconstancy of unripe years
Is Nature 's error on the way to truth.
But, hark! another cry! They call us hence.
Why come they not to us? Hark! Hist! again!
A clash of swords! Our band then is beset.
Alas, Elgiva!

ELGIVA.

Leolf, we are lost.
Say, is it so? I am not afraid.—But, oh!
Forgive me, Leolf, for I have wronged in you
The noblest of your kind. Oh, Edwin!....Leolf,
Tell him that I was true till death to him,
Though sometime false to you.

LEOLF.

Fly, fly, Elgiva!
Our horses are at hand—we still may fly.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII.

LEA IN CHESHIRE.

EDWIN. ATHULF. SIDROC.

SIDROC.

Neither of them, nor those that with them went,
Nor those that went to meet them, can I glean
One grain of tidings. Even lies are scarce,
And false reports arrive not.

ATHULF.

They are lost.

EDWIN.

Peace, Athulf! If thou wouldst not see me sink
To cowardice now, when most I need my courage,
Speak not that word again. They shall be found.
Let us but march on Malpas.

SIDROC.

By the way
It may be we shall meet them. But if news
Of them be wanting, of the Danes 'tis rife.
In Somerset, which now they leave behind,
Town, hamlet, monastery, church and grange,
Lie smoking, and at Glastonbury, Sweyne

Wasted the Abbot's lands, his treasure took,
And scared his bed-rid mother, that she fled,
Though seized with mortal sickness.

ATHULF.

Hurt to her
Strikes at the human corner of his heart.

SIDROC.

Upon him now, then, while his cheer is low.

ATHULF.

Oh, Sidroc! what is ours?

EDWIN.

Nay, hope the best.
Sidroc is right. We'll march at once on Malpas,
Sending the women to our friends in Wales.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IX.

MALPAS.

BRIDFERTH *and* RUOLD.

BRIDFERTH.

He is in much perplexity of mind.
You cannot see him. Since his Mother's death

He comes not from his chamber, save at night
When the sad Brethren of St. Benedict
Say masses for her soul.

RUOLD.

His Mother dead!

BRIDFERTH.

At Glastonbury she lay sick, and thence
Driven by the Dane, the terror of her flight,
Conspiring with her malady, put out
Her spark of life. To her great son she sent
Her dying charge that he, as best he might,
Should heal his country's wounds and give it peace,
And rescue from the Northmen's ravages
Its poor remains.

RUOLD.

Indeed! His Mother dead!
Well, had he lost ten mothers ten times told,
Still must I see him.

BRIDFERTH.

What 's your errand, then,
That is so instant? Of the Queen's escape
He knows already.

RUOLD.

That is not the last,

Nor yet the sharpest of the untoward strokes
That Destiny hath dealt us. What I know
I fear to tell, save to the Abbot only.
But, lo! he comes! And by my life I shrink
From telling it to him. Stand back a space.

[*They retire.* DUNSTAN *enters.*

DUNSTAN.

Why did I quit the Cloister? I have fought
The battles of Jehovah; I have braved
The perfidies of Courts, the wrath of Kings,
Desertion, treachery,—and I murmured not,—
The fall from puissance, the shame of flight,
The secret knife, the public proclamation,—
And how am I rewarded? God hath raised
New enemies against me,—from without
The furious Northman,—from within, far worse,
Heart-sickness and a subjugating grief.
She was my friend—I had but her—no more,
No other upon earth—and as for Heaven,
I am as they that seek a sign, to whom
No sign is given. My Mother! Oh, my Mother!
Who 's this? What are you, Sir? What brings you here?
Oh, ho! I know you. You are Ruold. Well,

What news from Chester? Easy watch you kept
Upon Elgiva. Let that pass. What more?
Your father's merits have redeemed your head
That else were forfeited.

RUOLD.

Lord Abbot, still
It stands a forfeit, if adversity,
Loss and disaster make a forfeiture.
Chester is burnt. The Dane came up the Dee,
And landing in the night, ere break of day
Slew half my force and fired the town.

DUNSTAN.

So! so!
Deem'dst thou that this should jeopardize thy head?
Far otherwise. But send Harcather here.
This news is welcome.

[*Exeunt* RUOLD *and* BRIDFERTH.

Is it not welcome? Yes;
It rings a shrill alarum in my ears,
Telling me that the murderers of my Mother
Are come to judgment. Give me back, oh God,
My health of heart, and waken me to wield

The weapons of thy anger. Oh, my Mother!
Thy deathbed was illuminate from Heaven,
And in the glory of prophetic light
Thy soul departed. From thy place thou seest
Thy word fulfilled—the Heathen hems us round—
Next thou shalt see thy son perform thy bidding,
And, gathering into one the broken force
Of this divided realm, with headlong might
Reject the Northmen to their native rocks.

Enter HARCATHER.

Harcather, we are threatened, hear'st thou not?
The raven that was watching from afar
Our mortal throes, deems that she now can tear
The body of the land. Nay, ravenous Dane,
We are not yet exanimate. Let all
That ever dreamt that they were Christians, join
To fight against these robbers of the sea,
And hurl them backward to their brine. Proclaim
A peace betwixt King Edwin and the Church—
In furtherance whereof will I divulge
Letters of absolution for those Earls
That hitherto are excommunicate.
Send me a Herald to King Edwin's camp.

—What staggering knave is this, with bloodstained pate
And livid lips? 'Tis Gurmo. What bring'st thou?
The Queen? Where is she? Hast thou got her safe?
He cannot speak.

GURMO.

Lord Abbot, she is dead.

DUNSTAN.

Dead! By what chance? Alive I bid thee take her,
And wherefore is she dead?

GURMO.

Her horse was fleet—
But fleeter is an arrow than a horse.
An arrow from my bow is in her heart.
And Leolf, too, is slain. But lo! I bleed;
For ere they slew him, I was hurt to death,
And by his hand. Short shrift for me I wot!
A priest—a priest—not you, Lord Abbot, no—
King Edwin now comes rushing on—Look out,
Or you shall be surprised.

DUNSTAN.

Harcather, fly;
The forces that are scattered draw together,
And plant them close and strong. A herald send,

I say again, with overtures to Edwin,
Inviting him to peace. A priest, good Gurmo?
No, 'tis myself must shrive thee; to my cell
Support him. Is he dead? Not yet—not yet.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE X.

A VILLAGE ON THE BORDERS OF WALES.

ETHILDA, EMMA, ERNWAY, *and* SIDROC.

SIDROC.

To Ernway's escort must I leave you now,
Lest my return should find a foughten field
And not a field to fight. The road is safe,
And Ruthin Castle you will reach ere long,
With a warm welcome from the good Ap Rhys.

ETHILDA.

When shall the tidings of the battle come
To Ruthin Castle?

SIDROC.

When to-morrow's sun
Behind the summit of Llanvarroch sinks,

Look down the valley. If the day be won,
A white flag flying in a horseman's hand
Shall fan you from afar, and kindle joy
In all your hearts.

EMMA.

No, never more in mine.

SIDROC.

If it be lost, perchance you shall descry
Some remnant that may fight their way to Wales,
In shelter of the mountains to abide
Till better times.

ETHILDA.

Commend me to the King,
And tell Earl Athulf I am strong in hope,
Rejoicing alway in his absolution,
And trusting we shall meet to part no more.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE XI.

THE WALLS OF MALPAS.

DUNSTAN. HARCATHER. A MESSENGER.

DUNSTAN.

'The Dane! The Dane!' Why pesterest thou mine ears
With that perpetual cry? How face the Dane,
Not knowing yet if Edwin be for peace?

HARCATHER.

For peace, Lord Abbot! nay, he cannot chuse.

DUNSTAN.

Let me know that, I say; let me know that.
See ye the Herald coming?

MESSENGER.

Ay, my Lord.

HARCATHER.

At Herald's pace. These fellows dream and prance,
Ever as in a pageant and procession.

DUNSTAN.

I bade him,—when in sight of Edwin's camp.

HARCATHER.

If he be now in sight thereof, that camp
Is nearer than we thought. It may be so.

MESSENGER.

But lo! he pricks his prancing to a gallop;
And see, my Lord, from forth the valley's gorge
Issues a cloud of dust.

HARCATHER.

By Egbert's bones,
It is the dust of Edwin's army. Stay—
A gleam comes through it—Run thou to my son,
And bid him lead the forces out forthwith.
Send me my horse.

DUNSTAN.

What think'st thou? Is it war?

HARCATHER.

Else wherefore this advance? To horse! to horse!

DUNSTAN.

Stop; be not hasty; now the Herald comes;
Hear we his tale.

HERALD *enters*.

Well, Sir, what saith the King?

HERALD.

He saith, my Lord, what I should but blaspheme
Should I recite it.

DUNSTAN.

What! thine office, Herald!
Speak me the very words.

HERALD.

My Lord, he saith
That with a bloody and a barbarous hand
You have torn out the very sweetest life
That ever sanctified humanity.
He saith that should he covenant to make peace
With the revolted Angels, yet with you
He would not, for he deems you more accursed,
And deeper in perdition. And he saith
Not she that died at Gibeah, whose twelve parts
Sent several through the borders and the coasts
Raised Israel, was avenged more bloodily
Than shall Elgiva be, the murdered Queen.
Wherefore he bids you come to battle forth,
And add another crime or answer this.

DUNSTAN.

Harcatlier, hear'st thou? To the field—away!
The gates of Hell stand wider than their wont
To let this Infidel and his army pass.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE XII.

BEFORE THE WALLS OF MALPAS.

The left of the field. Alarums and skirmishing. Enter ATHULF *and* SIDROC *with forces.*

ATHULF.

Three minutes till the rearward force is up—
Halt for three minutes—Sidroc, look, oh, look!
The King is plunging madly forward still.
Either an ambush he will find or else
They'll lure him through the gates. Go to him, Sidroc.

SIDROC.

No need of ambush for that headlong boy—
A town is not so manifest a trap
But it shall catch him.

ATHULF.

Fly, then, to his side,
And bring him back. There yet is time,—I think.
But now the rearward gathers up behind,
And lo! Harcather comes against us. Charge!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE XIII.

BEFORE THE WALLS OF MALPAS.

The right of the field. A body of Monks are seen ranged on the walls, holding up crosses and relics. In front, EDWIN *with Forces.*

EDWIN.

Nay, stagger ye at a show of hoods and gowns!
It is a murderer's disguise, I say,
And not a Christian's garb.—What spectre foul
Is yon that rises o'er the ruined wall?
I see the accursed Abbot's skinny hand
Held up aloft! Now God befriend the right.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE XIV.

BEFORE THE WALLS OF MALPAS.

The left of the field. Alarums and a retreat sounded. ATHULF *with a remnant of his force, and* RUOLD.

ATHULF.

I knew you not. Why pressed you thus upon us,
Alone and wounded as you are? Fall back.

RUOLD.

I seek my death,—but, Athulf, not from thee.

ATHULF.

Oh, gentle Ruold, in my sister's right
I bid thee live.

RUOLD.

Her spirit calls me hence.
Had I been resolute, she had lived to-day.
Farewell, brave Athulf. You have lost your King.

[*Exit.*

ATHULF.

It shall not be. Nay, hold your ground, my friends;
Turn on them—'Tis the last time—ay, the last—
Lo! there Earl Sidroc gallops from the right,
To tell us if the King can yet be saved.
Stand fast but till he comes. Crossbow-men, see!
They round the hill, the villains! Shoot together—
There flies the sleet that whistles in their beards—
Charge once again—Incomparably shot!
And here comes Sidroc. Well, how fares the King?

Enter SIDROC.

SIDROC.

Outwitted, lost, inveigled, snared, and worse,
If worse it be, wounded, they say, to death.
Soon as the execrable shape appeared
Of Dunstan on the walls, the tempest rose

Upon his heart, and drave him to destruction.
Athulf, away! for longer now to stand
Were worse than vain.

ATHULF.

They circle us about,
But we shall break their circle to their cost.
Well have ye battled for your King, brave hearts,
And now I bid you but to save yourselves.
Look not too narrowly at the fence, but leap;
And if it chance, as like enough it may,
That we be scattered, we shall meet again
At Ruthin, whither is the Princess fled.
Round her we rally. Ride, Sirs, for your lives.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE XV.

MALPAS.

Interior of the Cathedral. Candles burning, and altars decked, as for a service of thanksgiving. A corpse lies on a bier, in the transept. Monks enter in procession, and lastly DUNSTAN.

DUNSTAN.

So flee the works of darkness. Sing ye the psalm
'*Quid gloriaris.*'—Stop; a hasty step
Rings in the cloister.

Enter a SOLDIER.

SOLDIER.

I am bid, my Lord,
To seek the Lord Harcather, for his son
Ruold is slain.

DUNSTAN.

Silence! No more of that.
Harcather is gone forth to meet the Dane.
Let him not know it yet.—What corse is this?

A MONK.

The Queen's, my Lord, awaiting burial.

DUNSTAN.

Hers!—
Withdraw the winding-sheet, that once again
I may behold her.—Art thou she indeed!
The blankness of mortality in thee
Seems more than in another! Where be now
The flushings of the fervent cheek, the fires
That lightened from those eyes! Oh, rueful sight!
Methinks that thou dost look reproachfully.
Not me—not me—Upbraid not me, pale Queen!
I slew thee not, nor yet desired thy death;
I would have willed thee to repent and live,
But lo! the will of God hath mastered mine.

—Better be so than be the living cause
Of death eternal and a nation's lapse
To mortal sin. Nor sin nor sorrow now
Hath power upon thee ; nor canst thou, fair mask,
Be ever more their minister.

Enter an ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT.

My Lord,
The King, so please you—

DUNSTAN.

What, Sir, of the King ?

ATTENDANT.

He is again delirious and hath torn
The bandage from his wound. He bleeds amain.

Enter another ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT.

My Lord, the King, the King !

DUNSTAN.

What, comes he hither ?

Enter EDWIN *followed by a* PHYSICIAN *and* ATTENDANTS.

EDWIN.

Where art thou, my beloved ? Come to me !
Art thou not here ? They said so, but 'twas false—

Thou art not here, for if thou wert, I know
Thou 'dst fly to meet me.—Ha! I see thee now.
And yet thou mov'st not. What! in chains again?
Not so, Elgiva—thou art free, my Love—
I smote them with the sword. Oh, come to me!
Give me thy hand.

DUNSTAN.

Doctor, thou mad'st report
The fever had abated.

THE PHYSICIAN.

It had, my Lord,
But rages now afresh.

DUNSTAN.

How came he hither?

ATTENDANT.

He asked us if the Queen were buried yet,
Or where the body lay; we told him, here;
And he commanded we should bring him.

DUNSTAN.

See!

EDWIN.

Thy hand is very cold. Come, come, look up.
Hast not a word to say to so much love?
Well—as thou wilt—but 'twas not always thus.

So soon to be forgotten! Oh, so soon!
And I have loved so truly all this while!—
I dream—I do but dream, I think.—What's here?
'Tis not the dress that thou wert wont to wear.
This is a corpse! Attendance, here! What ho!
Who was so bold to bring a stone-cold corpse
Into the King's apartment? Stop—be still—
I know not that. Give me but time, my friends,
And I will tell you.

THE DOCTOR.

Draw him from the corpse:
This loss of blood, that drains the fever off,
Anon will bring him to himself.

A MONK.

My Lord,
I hear a shout as of a multitude
In the North Suburb.

DUNSTAN.

Bridferth, mount the tower,
And look abroad.

EDWIN.

That was a voice I knew—
It came from darkness and the pit—but hark!

An Angel's song . . . 'Tis Dunstan that I see!
Rebellious Monk! I lay my body down
Here at thy feet to die, but not my soul,
Which goes to God. The cry of innocent blood
Is up against thee, and the Avenger's cry
Shall answer it. Support me, Sirs, I pray;
Be patient with me . . . there was something still . . .
I know not what . . . under your pardon . . . yes . . .
Touching my burial . . . did I not see but now
Another corpse . . . I pray you, Sirs, . . . there . . . there . . .

[*Dies.*

BRIDFERTH (*from the tower*).

My Lord, my Lord, Harcather flies; the Danes
Are pouring thro' the gate. Harcather falls.

DUNSTAN.

Give me the crucifix. Bring out the relics.
Host of the Lord of Hosts, forth once again!

[*Exeunt, the trumpets of* OLAF *and* SWEYNE *sounding in the distance. The Curtain falls.*

NOTES.

PREFACE, PAGE xii.

'*The prayer of the Anglo-Saxon Liturgy, for deliverance à furore Northmannorum.*"

THE Anglo-Saxon ritual of the Cathedral Church of Durham, printed by the Surtees Society, contains some curious specimens of the religious services of the period. I am tempted to quote the invocation by which the Devil was prevented from riding upon horses, goats, and swine. "Habraham, Habraham! equos, capras, et porcusque benedic latrinibus, angelus qui positus est super animalia nostra custodiat ea, ut non poterit Diabolus inequitare illa. Habraham teneat vos per ac divinitas Dei, Deus ad dexteram, angelus ad sinistram, propheta vos prosequentur, martyres antecedant vos, patronesque persequentur, vos custodiat Dominus oves et boves, vitulos, equos et apes, custodi-

antque vos his pastores. Signum crucis Christi Jesu, in nomine Dei summi, per Dominum—"

I will add the "oratio" which was used on the occasion of shaving a virgin beard: "Deus cujus spiritu creatura omnis adulta congaudet, exaudi preces nostras super hunc famulum tuum juvenilis ætatis decore lætantem, et primis auspiciis adtondendum; exaudi, Domine, ut in omnibus protectionis tuæ munitus auxilio, cœlestem benedictionem accipiat, et præsentis vitæ presidiis gaudeat et æterne, per——"

The former of these offices represents the superstition of the Anglo-Saxon Church in all its grossness: the latter, though it may excite a smile, ought, however, to be regarded with respect, as one of those tendernesses of religious care with which the Church in old times watched over the lives of its members.

PAGE 1, ACT I., SCENE I.

"*For you shall know that what by ale or wine*
To man is done, that acorns do to swine."

This effect is owing probably to a process of fermentation taking place in the acorn, after it has lain some time on the ground in wet and warm weather.

PAGE 44, ACT I., SCENE VI.

" *And frankly with a pleasant laugh held out*
Her arrowy hand."

" Her arrow hand."—WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

PAGE 82, ACT II., SCENE II.

" *A love that clings not, nor is exigent,*" &c.

In case it should occur to any readers that they have seen this passage before, it may be well to mention that I have quoted it in a previous publication, without having thought it necessary to say in that place that the quotation was from an MS. of my own.

PAGE 103, ACT II., SCENE VI.

" HARCATHER.

" *Keep the King's peace? If longer than three minutes*
I keep it, may I die in my bed like a cow."

I have been induced here to preserve a flower of speech recorded in one of the chronicles of the time, though perhaps a little more peculiar than what I should otherwise have employed.

PAGE 110, ACT II., SCENE LAST.

" Oh, God!
I pray thee that thou shorten not my days,
Ceasing to honour this disnatured flesh
That was my mother."

This is borrowed from " The Revenger's Tragedy," by Cyril Tourneur.

" Forgive me, Heaven, to call my mother wicked!
Oh, lessen not my days upon the earth.
I cannot honour her."

PAGE 117, ACT III., SCENE I.

" *The wind when first he rose and went abroad*
Thro' the waste region, felt himself at fault,
Wanting a voice; and suddenly to earth
Descended with a wafture and a swoop;
Where, wandering volatile from kind to kind,
He woo'd the several trees to give him one.

* * * * *

Lastly, the pine
Did he solicit, and from her he drew
A voice so constant, soft, and lowly deep,
That there he rested, welcoming in her
A mild memorial of the ocean cave
Where he was born."

Perhaps I have been indebted here, though if so, I was unconscious of it at the time, to a well-known passage in 'Gebir.' At all events, that passage cannot be too often quoted, and I will transcribe it here:—

"But I have sinuous shells of pearly hue
Within, and they that lustre have imbibed
In the Sun's palace-porch, where, when unyoked,
His chariot-wheel stands mid-way in the wave:
Shake one and it awakens; then apply
Its polish'd lips to your attentive ear,
And it remembers its august abodes,
And murmurs as the ocean murmurs there."

PAGE 157, ACT III., SCENE VII.

"*Cumba is my gage,*
And by the crown of his head I know the times.
Grow they ascetic, then his tonsure widens;
Or free, it narrows in."

The tonsure was enforced upon the Secular Clergy, as well as on the Regulars; and as the Anglo-Saxons were very proud of their hair, this was a point of discipline which sometimes gave rise to difficulties.

PAGE 172, ACT III., SCENE VIII.

"*He bids you know that in this land this day*
He finds more fat than bones, more monks than soldiers."

I have taken the words of Fuller: "Indeed one may safely affirm that the multitude of monasteries invited the invasion and facilitated the conquest of the Danes over England..... because England had at this time more flesh or fat than bones, wherein the strength of a body consists; more monks than military men."—*Church History, Book II., S.* 51.

PAGE 211, ACT V., SCENE II.

"*But now I wax old,*
Sick, sorry, and cold,
Like muck upon mould
I widder away."

I have taken the liberty to borrow this from the "Processus Noe," one of the Towneley Mysteries, printed by the Surtees Society. In another place I have taken a mode of expression from the following lines in the "Mactatio Abel:"

"Felowes, here I you forbede
To make nother nose nor cry:
Whoso' is so hardy to do that dede,
The Devylle hang hym up to dry."

PAGE 213, ACT V., SCENE II.

"*At Winchester*
Ye heard how, in the west end of the church,
The night that Dunstan fled, the Devil skipped,
And with great laughter, in his roaring fashion,
Took up his 'O be joyful!'"

"The Divell was heard in the west end of the Church, taking up a great laughter after his roaring manner, as though he should show himself glad and joyful at Dunstan's going into exile."—*Holinshed, Chap.* 23.

PAGE 228, ACT V., SCENE VII.

Stage Direction—"*In front is a mortstone.*"

This was a large stone by the wayside, between a distant village and the Parish Church, on which the bearers of a dead body rested the coffin.

PAGE 232, ACT V., SCENE VII.

"*At once disclosed*
The picture of the past presents itself
Minute yet vivid, such as it is seen
In his last moments by a drowning man."

There are few psychological phenomena more interest-

ing or more worthy of scientific investigation than the one here alluded to,—the presentation to a man in a drowning state,—and not as far as I am aware to a man dying in any other way,—of innumerable acts and occurrences in a succession so rapid, that his whole life appears to be reflected in his last moments. There have been several examples of this in our own times, according to the relations of men who have been resuscitated out of a drowning state; and one of them is of such unquestionable authenticity and value that some claim may perhaps be advanced in the interest of Science to have it duly recorded.

THE END.

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